



Artists and the articulation of islandness, sense of place, and story in Newfoundland and Tasmania

by

Laurie Brinklow, BA, MA(IS)

Discipline of Geography and Environmental Science

School of Land and Food

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania,
April 2015

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

This thesis may be made available for loan. Copying and communication of any part of this thesis is prohibited for two years from the date this statement was signed; after that time limited copying and communication is permitted in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed

Laurie Brinklow

10 April 2015

Abstract

This dissertation explores and argues for a psychology of ‘islandness’, that sometimes imponderable feeling that comes from visiting or living on an island. It is a pre-rational, primordial, deep-in-the-marrow embodiment that incites rootedness and a seeming unparalleled yearning for home, though visitors may also be attuned to this or a similar experience.

Case studies are presented of the islands of Newfoundland, situated off Canada’s east coast in the North Atlantic Ocean, and Tasmania, located off Australia’s southern coast in the Great Southern Ocean. Though on opposite sides of the globe, these islands were chosen because they share many characteristics: roughly similar size and distance from the mainland, population, settlement origins, constitutional arrangements, and the fact that historically they have been the butt of mainland jokes. Yet both are conducive to artistic activity that seems disproportionately out of scale with the size of their populations. On these islands, artists—literary, visual, musical, performance, cinematic—increasingly focus on their localized identities and cultures, creating an attitude of cultural confidence that comes from maintaining cultural distinctiveness, particularly where a shared and bounded identity is crucial to creating community.

This study, then, argues that attachment to place, island identities, and the prevalence and place-specific quality of stories influences how islanders see themselves. The study draws on a range of theories and concepts that underpin the broader field of ‘Island Studies’, while remaining firmly rooted in phenomenology.

At their most basic, the dissertation’s ten chapters explore boundedness and connectedness: geographically, psychologically and socially, through the lens of place and attachment to place, and Island Studies. Analysing artistic expression of Newfoundland and Tasmanian culture and the words of their creators, the dissertation explores the inspirations and stories behind the art, the extent to which attachment to place, island identity, and the prevalence of story (the ‘glue’ that binds people to their place) play a role in islanders’ perceptions of self, individually and collectively. In the face of globalization and cultural homogenization, it is possible to learn from Tasmanian and Newfoundland artists about living with particularity and

maintaining distinctive cultures; about resilience and innovation; about living mindfully; about attachment to place and home; and about the role of story in creating and sustaining island identity.

The dissertation attempts to express the essence of islandness: to put words to the ‘imponderables’, and, in so doing, discover what islands can teach the rest of the world about how cultures change and adapt.

Acknowledgments

I thank the many people who aided me on this journey from one side of the planet to the other—literally and metaphorically. They include family, friends, fellow students, work colleagues, and a whole community of Island Studies scholars from around the world. In particular I would like to thank:

The School of Geography and Environmental Studies at University of Tasmania (now Discipline of Geography and Spatial Sciences, School of Land and Food) for accepting me into the program and being my institutional and intellectual home for four-and-a-quarter years. In particular I thank David Green, Trish McKay, Tracy Payne, Kate Boden, Paulene Harrowby, and Darren Turner for helping out with everything from cars to cash to computers. And a special thanks to Lorne Kriwoken, Graduate Research Co-ordinator, who hails from the same hometown as I do. Here's to interhemispheric synchronicity.

Australia's Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship, which made doing this PhD program possible. I could not have even considered such an undertaking without it.

The Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Development at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and its Director, Rob Greenwood, for offering me a second home while doing my research there. Thanks to Bojan Fürst (and his family, Michelle Porter, and daughters Elise and Dannika) for introducing me to Fogo Island, and to Kelly Vodden for sharing her St John's home with me.

Dan Murphy and the Tilting Recreation and Culture Society on Fogo Island, who offered me the use of the Jennifer Keefe Artist's Studio in Tilting; Heather Gushue and Emily Thomas, partners in my Newfoundland and Fogo Island adventure; Fiona Polack, Rob Finley, and their daughter Zuzu, along with Judy and Greg McCann-Beranger, for their legendary hospitality in St John's.

The University of Prince Edward Island: the place it all started. The people there have been my rock, and my net: Harry Baglole, Barry Bartmann, Brent MacLaine, Godfrey Baldacchino, Edward MacDonald, Jim Randall, Suzanne Thomas, Sean Wiebe, Matthew MacKay, Lisa Stapleton, and the students and teachers in the

Master of Arts in Island Studies program—past and present. And Matt Munro and Brandi Bell in the Young Lives Research Lab for being my lifeline to last-minute formatting expertise.

The network of Island Studies scholars around the world who have led the way, even though they may not have realised it at the time, and to such organisations as International Small Island Studies Association (ISISA) and Small Islands Culture Research Initiative (SICRI).

The organisers of international conferences which have allowed me to present my work over the years, and the editors of the journals, *Island Studies Journal* and *Shima*, which have allowed me to publish it.

The Thylacinians' 11 for letting me tag along to cricket matches all over Tasmania and who taught me how to love the game, and keep score.

My Tasmanian housemates Denbeigh Armstrong and Stewart Williams, and their children, Maddie and Harry, who welcomed me into their world with big hugs and cold feet (Maddie's!).

For their spectacular Bruny Island hospitality: Michaye Boulter and Rob Pennicott, and their children, Mia and Noah; and John Cameron and Vicki King.

For their friendship and *Famous Reporter* and Valentine's Day love poems when I was homesick: Ralph Wessman and Jane Williams.

For tea and Scrabble and bush walks: Millie and Garth and Qug and friends; for being part of the PhD journey, too: fellow PhD students Millie Roonie, Anna (and Dave) Wilson, Catherine Elliot, Mahni Dugan, and Jade Price. And a special thanks to Britta Hartmann who introduced me to island works by Walter de la Mare and Joanne Harris, and spent a weekend proofreading this dissertation. I owe you!

For their friendship and support: in Lismore: Lynda Hawryluk; Phil Hayward and Rebecca Coyle, and their spectacular daughters, Rosa and Amelia; and in Hobart: Pamela Balon and Paul Caddy, Andrew Harwood, Kate Booth, and my officemate Jenny Scott.

Sheryl MacKay for being my friend, and for helping me with interviews with artists on Vancouver and the Gulf Islands.

For keeping me sane: *Just Cause*'s owners Claire Nantes and John Mitchell, for endless hours of friendship and support and good food and wine and company (and the occasional nagging when I needed it); the women of the White Flannel Brigade; the Saturday afternoon trivia gang; the women at the Churchill Arms and the CARI pool (and hot tub); my Prince Edward Island writing groups, The Ladies Auxiliary (Elaine Hammond, Dianne Hicks Morrow, and Eliza Jane Wilson) and The WWW (Liza Oliver, Kathleen Hamilton, Orysia Dawydiak, Beth Jansen, Dianne Hicks Morrow, Yvette Doucette, and Margie Carmichael), and Terrilee Bulger and The Acorn Press (thanks, Terrilee, for buying my little Press so I could embark on this adventure of a lifetime!).

Richard Lemm, one of my earliest writing mentors and friends, and editor of the poems found herein.

My mom, Mary Lou Rowbotham, for telling me from the age of five that I was going to university.

My daughters, Heather Cowan and Mikhala Brinklow-McKnight, who continue to inspire me every day with their brains, poise, humour, and support of their eccentric mom; and to their partners, James Michel and Ben Smith, who support *them* in everything they do.

My partner Michael Mooney, who has been my anchor to home.

My supervisors, Pete Hay and Elaine Stratford, for shepherding the research and polishing the writing with such rigour, diligence, and good humour. And especially to Pete for coming back and back and back to Prince Edward Island, for fuelling my passion for poetry and islandness, and for saying 'yes'. I would never have undertaken this research without your inspiration, your knowledge and wisdom, and your unflagging support. Thanks, too, to Pete and his wonderful wife Anna Williams for welcoming me into their lives for all these years, and for introducing me to one of my favourite places on the planet: 'the shack' on Bruny Island.

Finally, a huge debt of gratitude to the writers and artists and musicians in Newfoundland and Tasmania, on Canada's west-coast islands and my home Prince Edward Island, who allowed me to interview them and to use their words, and in some cases their stories and their art, in this dissertation. Thank you for being my muse. This is for you.

Table of Contents

Declaration	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgments	vi
Table of Contents	x
List of Figures	xiv
Preface	xvi
Chapter 1 Introduction and methods	1
1.1 Background: Why I study islands	1
1.2 Aims and objectives	6
1.3 Methodology	11
1.4 The chapters	25
Chapter 2 A tale of two islands	27
2.1 From ‘place’ to ‘island place’	27
2.2 Poles apart: Tasmania and Newfoundland	38
Chapter 3 The rote of the sea.....	45
3.1 An act of God ... or geography	47
3.2 The ocean giveth	53
3.3 ... and the ocean taketh away	57
3.4 ‘That corrugated look to water’	64
3.5 ‘Retentir’	66

3.6	The elements: weather, light, wind	74
3.7	The edge	81
3.8	The horizon.....	87
3.9	Concluding thoughts.....	91
Chapter 4 The crossing.....		93
4.1	‘When did you first become aware that you lived on an island?’	98
4.2	The phenomenology of the crossing	102
4.3	The practical side.....	118
4.4	The psychology of boats.....	123
4.5	Other modes of crossing.....	127
4.6	Concluding thoughts.....	131
Chapter 5 ‘Thank God we’re surrounded by water’: The psychology of islandness.....		132
5.1	Islandness: Boundedness and Connectedness	136
5.2	‘So far from everything’	146
5.3	Home	151
5.4	‘Hard rock and water’	165
5.5	A ‘time-in’	168
5.6	‘My island as a house’	171
5.7	Leaving/staying/coming home	179
5.8	Island time	184
5.9	Concluding thoughts.....	189

Chapter 6 Inspiring islands	191
6.1 Ocean as inspiration	192
6.2 ‘Geopoetry’	201
6.3 Art from home—and from missing home	204
6.4 ‘Narrative cartographies’: Tasmania	212
6.5 ‘Narrative cartographies’: Newfoundland	219
6.6 The story behind the story: art goes political	236
6.7 Concluding thoughts	241
Chapter 7 The island mystic/que	242
7.1 Oceans and islands: the metaphor	244
7.2 From ‘islands of the blest’ to a secular spirituality	250
7.3 The ‘other’	255
7.4 Concluding thoughts	261
Chapter 8 Societal islandness	264
8.1 The ties that bind	267
8.2 ‘Big fish in a little pond’	273
8.3 Newfoundland’s dual character	277
8.4 Tasmania’s ‘cultural cringe’	285
8.5 ‘Come from aways’	289
8.6 Tradition and change	304
8.7 Islander coping strategies	309

8.8	Concluding thoughts.....	313
Chapter 9	Commodifying islandness	314
9.1	‘I don’t make money. I make boats’	315
9.2	The business of art and culture.....	317
9.3	Tasmania’s Ten Days on the Island	335
9.4	Arts and culture on Newfoundland’s Fogo Island.....	339
9.5	Concluding thoughts.....	345
Chapter 10	Conclusion	346
10.1	‘Teach ... your children well’	351
10.2	Creeping sameness	353
10.3	The power of lines	355
10.4	Islandness	357
References	359
Appendix A: The poems.....		401
Appendix B: Leaving by boat		429
Appendix C: A Goethean approach to islandness		432
Appendix D: The crossing from hell		435
Appendix E: Participant information sheet		439
Appendix F: Laurie Brinklow’s interview questions		442

List of Figures

Figure 0.1 – <i>Carte du Golphe de St Laurent et Pays Voisins</i> , 1760, Paris (public domain).....	xx
Figure 1.1 – <i>How I learned to love cricket</i> (photo by the author)	18
Figure 3.1 – <i>Old Sharemen</i> , 2011, by Winston Osmond (used with permission of the artist; herringcoveart.com)	73
Figure 3.2 – <i>Jerry</i> , 2008, by Tony Woodward (used with permission of the artist)	76
Figure 3.3 – <i>Shed Party</i> , 2011, by Adam Young (used with permission of the artist; ayoungstudios.com).....	80
Figure 3.4 – <i>Memory map of home</i> , 2012	82
Figure 3.5 – <i>As we left</i> , 2010, by Michaye Boulter (used with permission of the artist).....	92
Figure 4.1 – <i>Just Cause at 55</i> (photo by the author)	93
Figure 4.2 – Iceboats to Prince Edward Island (PEI Public Archives and Records Office)	96
Figure 4.3 – Confederation Bridge, Prince Edward Island (photo by the author)	97
Figure 4.4 – <i>No one home today</i> , photo by Paddy Barry (used with permission of the photographer)	108
Figure 5.1 – Newfoundland-centred map (used with permission of Memorial University)	147
Figure 5.2 – Tasmania-centred map: ‘Mapping the world from where you are’ (Sunny Spells, 2009)	148

Figure 5.3 – Student notebook cover: Prince Edward Island missing. Photo by Patrick Ledwell (used with permission)	150
Figure 5.4 – <i>Beach Ears</i> (photo by author)	168
Figure 5.5 – <i>Notes on a talk</i> by Francesca Panatta (used with permission of the artist: www.panatta-illustration.com)	173
Figure 6.1 - <i>Natural Resources</i> , by Victoria King (used with permission of the artist)	195
Figure 6.2 – <i>Ovum d’Aphrodite</i> , by Peter Adams (used with permission of the artist).....	204
Figure 6.3 – ©Living Planet, St John’s, NL (image used with permission; livingplanet.ca)	222
Figure 0.1 – <i>Charlottetown Conference</i> , 2014, by Susan Christensen	428
Figure 0.1 – <i>The crossing from hell</i> (photo by the author).....	436
Figure 0.2 – <i>Stories to tell</i> (photo by the author).....	438

Preface

from 'Living at Sea Level'

*Born without the ocean at my feet,
this living at sea level scares me.*

*I am used to thin air,
wraparound sky so close you
scrape it with your fingernail, jagged
peaks on the horizon my comfort zone, narrowing
my view.*

*There the edges are blurred,
a not knowing
where your land ends and
mine begins.*

*Here, at sea level, it's pruned and edged
steadfast and bound by
the prairie of ocean,
limits constant, inevitable* (Brinklow, 2010: 65).

The first quarter-century of my life was taken up with the search for home.

I grew up in British Columbia, on the west coast of Canada. As the eldest daughter of a construction-worker dad, I spent many of my early years living in a travel trailer, moving from job to job, town to town, school to school. I felt like a turtle who carried her home on her back; I convinced myself that anywhere I was was home. By the end of grade one, I had seen the inside of four schools; by grade twelve, I had been to nineteen. By the time I was twenty I had lived in and/or travelled through all the provinces and territories of Canada, Ontario westward. But, ironically, I had never been east of Ontario; for my family, going 'down east' meant going to Peterborough, the city of my birth, to visit the relatives. Quebec was a foreign country, and, well, the Maritimes were the armpit. Only poor people and fishermen lived there. And I didn't eat fish.

For as long as I can remember we were always going to 'the island'—Vancouver Island—because the non-Ontario branch of my dad's family—including my favourite cousins—lived there. Sometimes we lived there, too, especially when my dad

couldn't find a job; the Island was the place to go when we ran out of options.

I remember 'ferry panic' as my mom got us out the door ten hours and fifteen minutes before the six o'clock boat left, eight hundred kilometres away, and my dad going a hundred-and-twenty kilometres per hour down the Trans-Canada so we wouldn't end up being the first car in the line-up for the seven-o'clock. I remember the smell of boredom in our hot yellow station wagon: creosote from the dock pilings, sizzled tar from the pavement—and the seagulls wheeling and screeching above us. Finally rattling onto the boat, running hell-bent-for-leather up the stairs from the car deck, trying to be first in the cafeteria line-up for French fries. Precariously balancing trays while waiting impatiently for a window seat. Negotiating the lip around the table that stopped plates from hitting the floor when we hit the Georgia Strait full on. Watching the mainland fall slowly behind us and the Island loom just as slowly to greet us. Sprawling with my nose in a book across the vinyl seats, or hanging over the railing staring at our wake. My mother and father uncharacteristically relaxed and not fighting. We'd made it, and we could breathe again.

One of my earliest memories is living in a motel in Alberni, in 1964, just after a tidal wave from Alaska's Prince William Sound hit the Island's west coast, filling the swimming pool with black logs and slime before stopping just down the road from my aunt's house. The words, 'Vancouver Island is going to sink, you know', coming through the walls. Now, as a grown-up, I know about the San Andreas fault, I know about 'the next big one', and I dream about driving hell-bent-for-leather to the top of a mountain with all that water rushing in behind.

I find it rather ironic thirty-one years later to be so firmly attached to 'the Island' (with an upper-case 'I')—another island that is really just a glorified sandbar cradled in the waves just off the east coast of Canada: the tiny province of Prince Edward Island. Like most of the major turning points in my life, it was a chance left turn, in June 1983, when I was twenty-four, which led me to finding 'home'.

Leaving the house in London, Ontario, that gorgeous summer morning and heading out the highway to the 401, my partner and I didn't know where we were headed. It was, 'Shall we go back to the Yukon, where I had a job waiting?' or 'Should we go

visit the relatives in New Brunswick, since it was so close?’ So we turned left. East. Through that other country, Quebec, into northern New Brunswick, down the desolate Plaster Rock Highway, through picturesque fishing villages along the St Lawrence, into Chatham on the Miramichi River. It was while we were there that we heard that Prince Edward Island was the place to party: *you should camp at Stanhope, on the North Shore; you’ll have a great time.*

About Prince Edward Island I knew only two things: Anne of Green Gables and the name Campbell. In grade eight I had dressed up as Lucy Maud Montgomery and talked about ‘my’ *Anne* books—all of which I had read voraciously. In my grade eleven social studies class in Prince George, my teacher, Mr Hannams, made us memorize all the provinces, capital cities, and premiers—and told us that *everyone* on Prince Edward Island was named Campbell (after Premier Alex Campbell). (Turns out, he was wrong: if you take a ruler to the phone book, you will soon discover that everyone is named MacDonald, Arsenault, or Gallant.)

So after two weeks of visiting the relatives in New Brunswick we packed up our newly purchased tent trailer, the truck, the black-and-white cat, and the black lab/husky cross with different-coloured eyes we had brought from Whitehorse, and caught the ferry. I remember sitting in the line-up waiting for the boat at Cape Tormentine, my partner asking about the ocean—does it freeze?—and me saying, of course not—salt water doesn’t freeze! And Anne of Green Gables, is she real? Getting in a muddle myself: *no, she’s a character in a book. But it says here in the tourist info that we must visit her house in Cavendish. Maybe it’s the author’s house. Then why does it say it’s Anne’s house?*

That first trip across the Northumberland Strait is forever etched on my retinas: the water and sky a vast cerulean canvas; on the vertical you couldn’t tell where one ended and the other began. The red evening light imbuing the ochre cliffs with such intensity they seemed to glow from within. The twenty-three-shades-of-green fields like blankets flung across a sleeping child. I got off the boat and said, ‘This is home’.

Another quarter-century, a couple of partners, and two children later, I found myself wondering why I was so attached to the Island, why it was so emphatically ‘home’. I realise now that the puzzle started to unravel while I was pursuing a Master of Arts

in Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island. That the smell of creosote and cedar in the rain, the grit of sand and broken shells, sea glass and driftwood, ferry panic and camp fires and sleeping on the beach under the stars on that other island had all imprinted themselves upon me. That being cocooned within a shoreline meant home. And that being an islander meant you weren't like everyone else.

Through my work as publishing co-ordinator at the Institute of Island Studies, I discovered that I wasn't the only one who felt this way. As part of my job as administrator of the North Atlantic Islands Programme, I had the privilege of travelling to several islands, including Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the Isle of Man, the Åland Islands, Cape Breton Island, and Newfoundland. We also hosted conferences, where dozens of islanders came to us. What was the common bond that made them talk at these conferences—from the moment they got off the ferry or the plane until they got back on several days later? What was it about islands that was so special?

In asking that question now, as I engage with the concept of 'islandness', I have had remarkably similar responses, whether the person is island-born or -bred, or whether he or she came as a teenager or adult. When I tell them what I am doing, nearly everyone gets a far-off look in their eyes as they start to think about it. And then the conversation begins: *'I grew up here, but moved away to go to school. And now I'm back'*. *'Now that I think about it, we always go to an island for our vacation'*. *'When I go to an island, I need to climb to the highest point'*. *'I find that I can't live away from the ocean'*. Although a few look at me quizzically and wonder what all the fuss is about. Or they tell me they have never thought about it before: the little patch of ground they live upon is simply 'home'.

For those who *choose* to come to an island, some come to escape failed relationships or a meddling family, describing it, as one friend calls it, as a 'time-out'. A time-out from messiness on the mainland; a time to downsize, to regroup and reorder; a time to put things back in boxes, with boundaries—what any three-year-old in a time-out chair needs. Life can fit neatly once again within what Prince Edward Island poet Milton Acorn calls 'the wave-lined edge of home'. Others choose to come for the lifestyle—it never takes long to get anywhere, and rush hour is rush hour in paradise, but more usually rush minute. So many people say they came for six months, or

three, or just a holiday, and here they are still, years later. Captured.

An island can be an escape, a place to take stock—of your life and your psyche. It is a place where you can go to ponder, to find clarity in that liminal space at the water’s edge, where water cleanses stone and polishes away sharp edges. You come to recharge, rejuvenate, rebirth, or heal. It’s a place where you can go to dream while you’re looking outward at the infinitude in front of you—or to look inward, get in touch with who you are. Islands are what Prince Edward Island writer David Weale calls ‘the split-off part of ourselves’—and he should know as he spent many a summer on an island off an island off an island—Entry Island in les Îles de la Madeleine, located north of Prince Edward Island in the Gulf of St Lawrence.



Figure 0.1 – *Carte du Golphe de St Laurent et Pays Voisins*, 1760, Paris (public domain)

Being on an island is about physical, psychological, and social boundedness, in many senses of the word. Geographically, a strait or other body of water delineating an island is a definite, emphatic and simultaneously shifting barrier. Unlike a border, say, between two provinces or states—where it may feel just the same on one side of the ‘imaginary’ line as it does on the other (if you even know or notice you have crossed it)—you have to make a conscious decision to get to an island—or indeed to

leave it.¹ A water boundary provides a tangible separation between what you are leaving behind and what you are heading towards. When Northumberland Bridge Builders built the thirteen-kilometre Confederation Bridge to Prince Edward Island in 1997, what many people missed most thereafter was the ferry ride. Gone was that ‘in-betweenness’ when you were neither here nor there, when you could catch your breath and savour time to yourself, or you could check out the lounges to see if you knew anyone to go have coffee with—and invariably you would.

On islands there is a psychological boundedness, too. We all know the phrase from John Donne’s meditation, ‘No man is an island’. Yet many of us *are* islands—*islanded*—and some of us are more so than others. Just how much you let in—or out—depends on the tides, the shore, your own personal boundaries. Think of all those stoics we know, who reveal little. At the same time, a small island is knowable. You can get your head—and your arms—around it. An island is not something apart from you, but is something you can be a part of. You can live your life with certainty knowing where your edges are. For some people, an island is not an island unless you can go to its highest point and see the water all around. For others, you know that if you keep walking you will come to the edge eventually. For some, knowing that after the ferry stops running at night, who’s on the island is on it, and who’s not is not. For others, it’s the way the light falls on the trees or the intensity of the rainbows, the way the fog rolls in over the bay or the rain comes down sideways, or the way the clothes snap on the clothesline or the woodpiles are stacked.

For some, living on an island is a symbol of their search for simplicity, to get back to what it means to ‘be’ instead of ‘do’. But for all its apparent simplicity, there is an intensity to island life—it is distilled, pared down to the essentials. It gives meaning in a meaningless world, place when you are mired in placelessness. Islands capture people’s imaginations: we write about them, make songs and art and movies about them, vacation on them, and sometimes we want to *own* them, as if an island is the acme in acquisitions, the last bastion of colonialism, when people are seeking to control *something* in their lives.

¹ On the other hand, a border crossing between countries—for instance between the US and Canada—although human-made, in the post 9/11 era is a definite delimiter.

Then there are societal bounds. If you are open, islanders will take you in. Just as the island can give you what you need, the island is open to what you give it. You can make a difference on an island; it is easy to become a big fish in a little pond. You might have to listen to the jokes of having to be seven generations born and bred before you're a real islander. But you can take solace in the fact that the erratics that came with the ice age are considered 'from away', too. You learn to live within family and societal rules, getting along with other islanders in a small bounded space—spoken but mostly unspoken—relations *ships* navigating murky waters. However, some come-from-aways or 'blow-ins' never fit in, or they find the in-your-facedness, the parochialism, intolerable. They're usually miserable, and most of them leave.

After a while, to live on an island can become a badge of honour. You're proud that you're a little 'out there', that maybe you have to work a little harder in order to survive. Islanders are a resilient lot, which can come from having to cope with and adapt to the harshest of the elements, the isolation, occasionally having the mainland cut off yet again. Islands are small enough to adapt quickly to change. They can turn on a dime, meaning they can be a laboratory for change. They can also be the canary in the coal mine, what Depraetere (2008: 20) calls 'environmental and cultural bellwethers', harbingers of what is to come on a global scale.

Someone told me once that 'islands are places mainland people forget'. It is easy to get huffy when mainlanders forget to include you on the map. First you get defensive, then you get downright annoyed. Then you realise it is probably just as well—it is getting kind of crowded and you don't want them here anyway. And some islanders, such as those on Newfoundland, are known for their sense of humour—Newfoundlanders have an indomitable spirit that comes from being seen as the underdog when *they* know that they're not. Rumour has it that they started the Newfie jokes that are told on the mainland. And then there are the two-headed Tassie jokes. Tasmanians probably plant them to keep people away: *don't tell anyone what Tasmania is really like, or everyone will want to live here.*

And if you were born on an island, you are already ahead of the game. You may spend your childhood waiting to leave, but after a while you find yourself jumping at the first chance to come back. Places have a way of imprinting themselves on you,

especially when you are young, but it can happen when you are older, too (like me). That place where you've had particularly moving experiences helps you define who you are, becomes part of your identity. Because life on an island is often distilled, concentrated, islandness focuses people's attachment to place. Because the island is bounded, defined against a larger mainland, islanders sometimes feel as if they are a people apart—something about being the underdog, that you have worked just a little harder to get there, or survive there. And from the island you can orient yourself to the world. It's home.

To become an islander is to know in your bones that you are home. I set down roots in this fertile red soil where my children were conceived and born. My memories are of skating with them on winter ponds, paddling with them along the shoreline, throwing sticks for our golden retriever along the Confederation Trail that runs the length of the island, watching the movement of the marram grass answer the wind and the sea grass answer the tide, walking the red-sand shore and building sand castles, and seeing the sun set at Brackley Beach—they are all part of who I am on my island. Its story is my story. If place is important as the ground in which we plant ourselves with firmness and conviction, orienting ourselves to the world, then it stands to reason that the smaller the place the more solid it is in relation to our consciousness: you can hold it in your head—and your heart. On an island you can *see* with your eyes just *where* you are, and what your limits are. And this might give you a better perspective on the world—simple ground instead of complex, wholeness instead of fragments. The island as metaphor for the self; the island as the perfect little poem.

from 'Living at Sea Level'

*But it is only here, colouring in the lines
that bind me to this place
that my edges are defined.*

*I'm getting used to sleeping
with the roar of the ocean in my ears* (Brinklow, 2012: 65).

Chapter 1 Introduction and methods

1.1 Background: Why I study islands

Islands have been a focus of curiosity, and study, for millennia—even before people knew they were studying them, when ‘island studies was called seafaring’ (Wright, 1995: n.p.). What started as access points to the sea’s bounty for seasonal hunter-gatherers became staging grounds for exploring new lands, islands eventually becoming places to exploit for their resources and strategic locations. Early explorers wondered if islands were the ‘detritus of crumbling continents or seeds of new ones ... places of ending or of origin’ (Edmond & Smith, 2003: 1). Since then islands have been seen as microcosms and testing grounds, sites of utopian fantasy and dystopian nightmare, and places of incarceration for disease or misdeeds. They have been nurtured and fought over, populated and deserted. They have been seen as stand-ins for the body and the ego, symbols for epic journeys and existential questionings. For many, they have been, simply, home.

As a student new to Island Studies in 2003, I became enthralled with David Quammen’s *The Song of the Dodo* (1996). His eloquent storytelling and elegant prose made it easy to grasp the significance of islands in explaining evolution while providing metaphors that we in Island Studies could borrow or adapt to help explain our own work in other disciplines. Indeed, the words, ‘We are headed toward understanding the whole planet as a world of islands’ (Quammen, 1996: 130), became a mantra for us at the Institute of Island Studies; they still appear on Island Studies promotional material. With concepts based in the ground-breaking *Theory of Island Biogeography* by MacArthur and Wilson (1967), and Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* (1859) and Wallace’s less famous but just as significant *Island Life* (1880), Quammen (1996: 18) shows us that islands ‘are havens and breeding grounds for the unique and the anomalous ... natural laboratories for extravagant evolutionary experimentation’. As he says, ‘Charles Darwin himself was an island biogeographer before he was a Darwinist’; islands ‘give clarity to evolution’ (1996: 18). Thus, the very isolated and insular nature of many islands and archipelagos gives rise to the creation of the weird and wonderful, which Quammen ably demonstrates by reference to examples of species from islands around the world.

The book inspired me to attempt to make comparisons between the evolution of island flora and fauna and the creation and evolution of human cultures on islands; in a subtitle to his seminal essay, ‘The Ballad Dance of the Faeroese’, Eric Clark (2004) labels this area of study ‘island biocultural geography’. But as I soon discovered, many eminent scholars had these thoughts long before I did. For instance, at the turn of the twentieth century, Ellen Churchill Semple helped create what John Gillis (2004: 113) calls ‘secular myths about the nature of islands and islanders ... the natural law of islands’ which had at its heart islanders bearing a ‘deeply ingrained insular character’. Semple’s ‘geographical determinism’ and ‘theories of inherited traits to formulate a notion of island races’ became what Gillis (2004: 114) calls ‘racialist essentialism’. Gillis counters this tendency by pointing out the obvious: ‘in the early modern period islanders were among the most cosmopolitan of all the world’s people, isolated perhaps but hardly insular in their habits and attitudes’ (114). I quickly changed direction. After all, no one wants to be known as a racialist essentialist.

In his work on the Faroes, and other collaborative writing, Clark identified other scholars—Jean Brunhes, Harold Brookfield, David Lowenthal, Peter Haggett, Jared Diamond—who built on the idea that ‘systematic island studies have constituted a powerful approach within geographical tradition’ (Tsai & Clark, 2003: 187). Indeed, islands have proven to be useful research laboratories for many a scholar across a wide array of disciplines; for instance, Margaret Mead’s research of young girls’ sexuality in Samoa influenced how anthropology is studied even today (Baldacchino, 2004: 274). As Gillis (2004: 108) states, scientists in the eighteenth century knew that ‘their small scale and bounded nature made their study seem so much easier than was the case with large land masses. Another attraction lay in the very distance that separated the mainland observer from his object of inquiry, thus enhancing the appearance of objectivity’.

Yet islands are more than mere microcosms and laboratories, and the works and effects of mainlanders studying islands are not always the same as those which emerge from islanders studying islands (Gillis, 2014: 156). As McCall (1994: 106)

suggested when he brought the word ‘nissology’ to the fore,² islands and islandness have come to be studied ‘on their own terms’. Borrowing from the title of Mead’s seminal book, Godfrey Baldacchino (2004) refers to the coming of age in Island Studies, later noting how islands are studied through the lens of ‘islandness’ (Baldacchino, 2006). In the last thirty years or so, articles about islands have come to abound in dozens of edited collections and textbooks, and in academic journals devoted to Island Studies (see s. 1.3 below). Among these journals are *Island Studies Journal*, *INSULA*, *Shima*, and the *Journal of Coastal Research*. Organisations such as the European Union’s Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), the UN’s Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)—with its membership deriving from the Small Island Developing States (SIDS)—and UNESCO’s International Scientific Council for Island Development (INSULA) are examples of intergovernmental agencies that look at island-related concerns. Other non-profit organisations include the International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA), Small Island Cultures Research Initiative (SICRI), Global Islands Network (GIN), Réseau d’Excellence des Territoires Insulaires (RETI), the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at University of Hawai’i, International Institute for Okinawan Studies (IIOS), and Japan Society of Island Studies (JSIS), all of which host information websites, research programs, and regular conferences. Island Studies is taught at four universities at least: the University of Prince Edward Island (through the Master of Arts in Island Studies, and the Island Studies minor), the University of the Highlands and Islands, the University of Malta’s Islands and Small States Institute, and University of Santiago in Chile. Island Studies research institutes include the Institute of Island Studies at UPEI and the Island Institute in Rockland, Maine. All are dedicated to the multi- and interdisciplinary study of the world’s islands by considering everything from anthropology to zoology. Since nearly ten per cent of the world’s inhabitants live on islands, and nearly twenty-five per cent of the world’s sovereign states are islands (Baldacchino, 2007a: 1), it is not before time that the practice of studying islands has proliferated on a global scale.

² From the French, ‘*nissologie*’ used by Christian Depraetere (1990–91) to define the study (from the Greek ‘*logos*’) of islands (‘*nisos*’).

Through such research, scholars are finding that many of the assumptions that have been imposed on islands—binaries such as prison/paradise, heaven/hell, insularity/resilience, leaving/staying, insider/outsider, tradition/change—are actually complex continua; just ask any islander if he or she sees island living as a blessing or a curse and you will get a different answer on any given day. Some islanders bristle at the idea of the island being used as a laboratory or as a unit of measurement,³ and others take umbrage at the island being used in only the metaphorical sense (Hay, 2006, 2013) as doing so ignores and thus seemingly negates the point that actually living on an island is ‘a deeply visceral lived experience’ (Hay, 2006: 34). Godfrey Baldacchino (2008: 38) sums it up this way:

The *problematique* of island inquiry is that there will always be epistemological and methodological challenges associated with studying islands because we are grappling with the impact, conditioning and paradigmatic effects of the hybrid identity and ‘location’ of subject (islanders, natives, settlers, tourists, second home owners), as well as those who would study them—who may be locals as well as outsiders (mainlanders, continental dwellers)—looking in.

Indeed, the mere definition of ‘island’ has come into question. For instance, do bridged islands—such as Cape Breton Island or Prince Edward Island—still count as islands? And what about size: is Australia an island or a continent? And should we include Greenland, which is geographically larger than Manhattan, Singapore, and even Great Britain, yet which exhibits more traits of islandness than heavily populated tiny islands? For when researchers try to devise a theoretical framework in which to study islands, ‘intractable fault-lines’ (Hay, 2013) arise. But despite those challenges, in recent years increasing numbers of islanders have taken up the mantle

³ Here is just one example of Prince Edward Island being used as a unit of measurement: ‘In the last 40 years, farmland approximately twice the size of Prince Edward Island has been taken over for urban activities’, says Dr Doug Ramsey from Brandon University’s Department of Rural Development and member of a research team that will spend 2014–2018 studying agricultural land use planning in Canada. The practice is prevalent, particularly in Canada’s national media (Brandon University).

of Island Studies—evidenced in the growth of academic programs and institutes, government and non-government organisations, academic conferences and research programs devoted to studying islands. It is becoming obvious that we are taking charge of our own stories, studying and defining islands on their own terms, through the lens of ‘islandness’.

Because of my own early imprinting, followed by years of travel to and from islands, meeting islanders the world over, I knew instinctively that island space was different from mainland space—that islands are bounded geographically, psychologically, and socially. I decided to explore boundedness through that connective tissue that is islandness, and to consider how ‘physical boundedness conduces to psychological distinctiveness, because it promotes clearer, “bounded” identities’ (Hay, 2002b: 79). Yet islandness is about connectedness, too, because islands are not closed loops. The wind blows in new spores from other lands, bringing in new species, traders, and explorers (at one end of the timeline), whilst radio, television, and the Internet (at the other) bring in new ideas from the outside. The Tasmanian devil can only be found in Tasmania, and, so, too, is the Faroese ballad dance only found in the Faroe Islands (Clark, 2004). Certain idioms are virtually invisible or have died out in England and Ireland, but these same idioms are preserved in local speech in Newfoundland (Momatiuk, 1998: 9). The island of Komodo’s ‘dragon’ is the largest lizard to be found in the world. The fame of the musician Bjork and the Nobel-Prize-winning author Haldor Laxness is far disproportionate to the small population of 327,050 (Statistics Iceland, 2014: n.p.) people on their home island of Iceland. Another example of this kind of ‘gigantism’ or ‘punching above one’s weight’ is the runaway success of the international company Specsaver in the tiny island of Guernsey—which has found the scale of the island attractive for a creative business that attracts creative employees from the mainland. Just as there are attempts to reintroduce a species that may be extinct on one island and not another, Scottish fiddlers go to Cape Breton to relearn their craft; it is widely held that the tradition of Scottish fiddle music has been *better* preserved in Cape Breton. Just as Jersey French and Guernsey French are unique to those archipelagic islands, both dialects have their roots in France, a stone’s throw away, begging a further question: is the archipelagic ‘stepping stone’ development pattern part of the equation (Stratford et al., 2011)?

While I did not wish to mire myself in the ‘geographical determinism’ that islandness might suggest, I thought that some of the vocabulary and principles were transferable between island biogeography and island biocultural geography. For instance, it is a principle of biogeography that species are put under pressure as an ecosystem becomes fragmented (for any number of reasons such as expanding settlement, highway construction, river damming), with the result that some species become extinct. Ironically, paradoxically, globalization puts pressure on distinctive cultures, too. Already hundreds of languages have been lost; distinctive diets have been replaced by Big Macs; YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter have become household words in farflung corners of the globe. Yet—again, paradoxically—the de-fragmenting or connectedness of global mass communication has enabled us to learn about diverse cultural practices on islands at a pace that far outstrips what we gleaned in the millennia before the Internet. As promotional material for Quammen’s *Song of the Dodo* suggests, ‘this island idea is so important because islands are where species most commonly go extinct ... we live in an age when all of Earth’s landscapes are being chopped into island-like fragments of human activity’ (Simon and Schuster, n.d.: n.p.). Islands may be insular but they have porous boundaries, and thus have always been subject to change through their maritime connections; the Internet and other technologies just speed up the process. Indeed, island cultures *must* adapt in order to survive; otherwise they become homogenized to a globalized norm; vulnerable or extinct; or relegated to museum-like status through efforts by tourist operators and government departments to present the ‘authentic’ island cultural experience.

1.2 Aims and objectives

On an island, the scale of living is often smaller, closer together. But it is in such a climate that one will often find dynamic cultures: islands nurture creativity and allow for what Hay (2002b: 82) calls ‘passionate engagement, drawing links from the particular to the universal’, elaborating thus:

If island art embodies a psychological distinctiveness, if it is concerned with a politics of identity, and constructed in reaction to the particular stresses of a hard-edged, bounded existence, it follows that island art should be

confrontational, abrasive ... [taking] loss, dislocation, disconnectedness, isolation, stigmatisation, and marginalisation for its themes ... address[ing] the large questions of existence ... within a context of shore-bound particularity (2002b: 81–2).

And so it is through the lens of art—poetry, painting, photography, music, and film, for example—and through the words of artists, that I decided to explore that most elusive of concepts: islandness. For, as geographer Russell King (1993: 13) writes, an ‘island is a most enticing form of land ... For those of artistic or poetic inclination, islands suggest mystery and adventure; they inspire and exalt’. For instance, visual artist Mary Pratt (in Momatiuk, 1998: 77) writes, ‘Newfoundland presented me with things to paint—the fish, the cruelty, but also an understanding of the basic, which I would never have found in Fredericton [New Brunswick]. Everything stripped right down: true joy, real hate, no apologies. Nobody apologizes for hating anybody here’. Artist Gerry Squires (in Momatiuk, 1998: 89) echoes Pratt:

Things are so real here. People are real. The landscape is real: harsh, beautiful, ugly. The rocks are like bones sticking out of the ground, with this thin skin of soil. They are always underfoot and you are aware of them all the time. Wherever you go, the landscape and weather are overbearing. Fishermen are always on that edge, working between life and death.

In the process of this exploration I want to discern whether, for some artists, the ocean is a hinterland, part of the unconscious, from which they draw inspiration: questions of God and the unknown, the infinite beyond the horizon, the mysterious ‘other’. The sea can be a symbol, perhaps dreaming of the future, constancy, the ebb and flow of life, or escape; or it can be a cocoon—offering safety, and accentuating home and attachment to home. Do artists reflect their physical space through their art, and, if so is there nothing so potent as the ocean and the edge to engender creativity?

I am also interested in whether, how, and to what extent the island ‘hothouse’ has become an attractive breeding ground for artistic practice—just as it has for island flora and fauna. Examples of giant and dwarf species abound on islands, their exoticism coming to prominence around the globe because they cannot be found

elsewhere. Similarly, culture on islands is apprehended and then valued for similar reasons: the island experience is exotic. Indeed, to borrow from writings about people's support of the 'green movement', love of islands is 'pre-rational' for many (see Hay, 2002a); we often cannot explain in words why we are so attached to our island place. When Cape Breton Island writer Alistair MacLeod won the prestigious Impac Dublin Literary Award for his novel, *No Great Mischief*, one reviewer said, 'I felt that I had been breathing the cold clear air of Cape Breton and been granted an insight into a part of human history' (Impac, 2001; n.p.). In a similar vein, Newfoundland author Lisa Moore (2006: 87) writes about Tasmanian and Newfoundland literature as having 'captured the international imagination, to the extent that they have, partly because they are charting uncharted territory—the specific details of place, voice, cadence, and wit that come from living on islands at the periphery, at the ends of the earth'. Little wonder, then, that American writer Barry Lopez (1996: 4) writes about 'the human ability to make a story', a story that is grounded powerfully in place, and about 'the power of the human imagination to extrapolate from an odd handful of things ... Eventually, the landscape inhabits *us*, and its accumulated stories and memories become part of our collective narrative'. Thus island artists seem more and more focused on their localized identities and cultures—their homes. Indeed, having power over their own stories is a way of ensuring that their voices—and truths—are heard. As a result, island artists also seem to offer an attitude of cultural confidence that may derive from maintaining distinct cultural identities, particularly those physically set apart, and where a shared identity is crucial to creating community. In short, it is possible to speculate that essence of place (its *genius loci*), attachment to place, island identity, and the prevalence of story play significant roles in islanders' individual and collective perceptions of self. But these possibilities are extensible; the particularism of island places and island voices often resonates to the universal. Authentic stories grounded in real lives that speak to common themes are those that bring the most critical acclaim from audiences around the globe.

Islands also attract people seeking connection to a place in order to give their lives meaning, a 'belonging [that] is rooted in a powerful sense of community and kinship which serve to consolidate a common heritage, shared places and social knowledge' (Dodds & Royle, 2003: 488). Thus, it is one thing to set oneself apart, making

islandness exclusive in order to protect one's place in the world. It is quite another to live as part of a global society, but to do so with particularity—particular spaces, particular ethnicities. In this respect, Hay (2006: 22) argues that boundedness is, indeed, a strong contributor to island identity:

Those who stress the hard-edgedness of the shoreline also tend to emphasise the contribution such a heightened sense of physical containment makes to the construction of an island identity ... The strong sense of island identity stemming from the sharpness of that wave-lined boundary is often said to consist in the community-defining bond of a shared sense of isolation that generates a 'unique sense of difference to other populations'. Islophiles tend to extol this sense of insularity; to see it as a source of islander resilience and versatility, and a state of existence to be cherished.

Because of their small size and interrelatedness, islands are ideal sites for living with openness to the world, with resilience, inclusivity, and fluidity. Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2001: 23) argues for an archipelagraphy when theorizing about island literature, writing that 'no island is an isolated isle and that a system of archipelagraphy—that is a historiography that considers chains of islands in fluctuating relationship to their surrounding seas, islands and continents—provides a more appropriate metaphor for reading island cultures'. Historically, too, islands have changed and will continue to do so; thus DeLoughrey continues, 'In the mix of the old and the new, island identities shift—they are endlessly remade, but enough remains constant for *the* island to persist' (24). Likewise, Hay (2006: 25) suggests—though wonders if it is not too simplistic a view—that 'the longer a community of people lives on an island, and the smaller the island, the stronger the sense of island identity, and of identification with the island'. Arguably, then, islanders who have a strong attachment to their place, defined by stubbornness, stoicism, romanticism, or even an inferiority complex, will fight vociferously to maintain their independence and thus their culture. For example, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a rich and vibrant culture, distinct from the rest of Canada—that which is the envy of many Canadians. And relative isolation—*islandness*—seems to play a part.

Isolation also concerns Jean Arnold (2002: 32), who echoes Quammen in observing that ‘island Earth’ serves a purpose in literature and culture: ‘the small spherical island Earth [is] set in an endless ocean of space. This island-like image has emerged as one of the most powerful of all in determining our own cultural ideologies and discourses’. Arnold believes that ‘islands have been useful to writers because their distinctive geographical formations have supplied narrative settings that isolate ideas’ (24). While this relationship between geographical and cultural isolation is fundamental to questions of island cultural diversity and island identity, it is possible to learn much about island cultures from studying the effects of globalization.

The foregoing ideas have led me to address a specific set of questions in the pages that follow: How does island living, and the corequisite ‘living on the edge’, affect people, and—of special interest to me—artists? What roles do the various types of boundedness—geographical, psychological, and societal—play in creating islandness? How do place attachment and ‘the endless cycling of stories’ reinforce islandness? What roles do memory, homesickness, and nostalgia play in keeping a culture alive? Finally, can island cultures withstand the threatened homogeneity that comes with globalization while evolving into something different, stronger?

Examination of these questions is, below, framed by the scholarship on place and attachment to place—in this case, islands—and by close analysis of representations of culture on the islands of Newfoundland⁴ and Tasmania. Despite the fact that they are on opposite sides of the globe, I chose these islands because they share many characteristics: roughly similar land area and distance from mainland, population, constitutional arrangements, and the fact that both islands were at one time the butt of mainland jokes. Yet both are conducive to artistic activity that seems proportionally out-of-sync with the size of their populations. Finally, I want to know what they can teach us about living with particularity and maintaining distinctive cultures on their islands; about resilience and innovation; about living mindfully and quality of life; and about the importance of island identity and of roots and routes, of

⁴ For the purposes of this study, I focus on the island portion of the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador, which has traditionally been called Newfoundland.

attachment to place and home. In the end, what can these islands teach the rest of the world about how cultures change and adapt?

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Theoretical underpinnings

In creating an epistemological framework for my research, I first looked to the field of Island Studies for my theoretical underpinnings. Theories of ‘nissology’ are oft-debated in the literature—or, rather, the lack of such theories raises comment—since, although the ‘difference and otherness of islands in all their number and variety are what has always grounded island studies’, it is those very characteristics of difference that make it difficult to ‘create the one distinctly coherent body of work that is island studies’ (Williams, 2012: 228). Hay (2013: 209) calls the differences ‘intractable fault-lines’, with multitudinous sizes, distances from mainland, and relative isolation of islands playing a role. Other factors include whether an island is surrounded by warm or cold water; whether it has experienced a colonial history; or whether it is extremely isolated or is serviced by modern transportation and technology. Whether an island is real or not is another intractable fault-line, for ‘in eliding the real lives of real people into abstractions’ (Hay, 2013: 213) through metaphor or ‘the island effect’ (Baldacchino, 2007a: 2), ‘it is profoundly disempowering’ (Hay, 2013: 213) to islanders, ‘smear[ing] out lives and real islands into the bland non-being of abstraction (Hay 2013: 212). Fletcher (2011: 30) sums it up when she says there is still ‘some distance to go’. And Baldacchino (2006: 9) wonders if a ‘distinctive methodology’ of Island Studies is even necessary, since the ‘inter-, or even trans-, disciplinary focus of critical inquiry and scholarship’ is ‘the field’s major strength’ offering ‘enormous potential’.

In looking to find common ground on which to base an Island Studies theory, one would think that being surrounded by water would be enough. For, as Hay (2013: 211) has written, ‘if there is something to the realness of islands that can sustain an intellectual preoccupation called “island studies”, it must ... have to do with the element of the sea’. Well, apparently it is not, since ‘sometime islands’ are possible where tide roads enable crossings on foot twice a day; so, too, are used-to-be-islands—lands bridged in some way. You can have peninsulas and mainland

coastal areas accessible only by boat, mimicking the isolation and watery reality of a real island; or you can have inhabitants of continental Australia feeling that they, too, are on an island. You can have islands-off-islands that create mainlands of islands, making one's island or mainland status dependent on the direction of one's gaze. And, on large islands, it is possible for those who live far enough inland to rarely if ever interact with the sea; being an islander is not part of their consciousness.

In the end, I decided to take up the mantle put forward by Hay (2013), arguing for a 'psychology of islandness' that transcends these intractable fault-lines, placing the onus for one's sense of islandness on individual and community perceptions of islandness. Through the lens of phenomenology, and the day-to-day experience of island living, I explore how islandness arises and is made manifest.

Phenomenology is the study of experience. It calls upon the researcher to see and experience what is going on around him or her in an engaged yet dispassionate manner, and then to reflect critically on what is seen and experienced. It is a method of descriptive inquiry, illuminating and clarifying what it studies.

Grounded in the work of German philosophers Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), and French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), phenomenology begins with the phenomenon itself as it is lived and experienced, not theorized. The researcher must be present to the phenomenon being studied, without guiding or making conclusions, but offering an opening for disclosure to occur (van Manen 1990: 30-4). Once the researcher has inquired and reflected on the phenomenon, he or she attempts an 'incantative, evocative speaking', a 'primal telling' wherein the aim is to involve the 'voice' in what Merleau-Ponty (1973) calls 'poetizing'. This is more than analysis and interpretation in that it aims to let the quality of the phenomenon speak through the encounter with thoughtfulness, what Heidegger (1962) called 'a minding, a heeding, a caring attunement', and van Manen (1990: 12) described as 'a heedful, mindful wondering about the project of life, of living, of what it means to live a life'.

Max van Manen (1990: 30–1) describes the methodological structure of human science research thus:

Reduced to its elemental methodological structure, hermeneutic phenomenological research may be seen as a dynamic interplay among six research activities:

- 1) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
- 2) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
- 3) reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
- 4) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and re-writing;
- 5) maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
- 6) balancing the research context by considering parts and the whole.

Following van Manen, then, I turned to that aspect of ‘island studies’ that interested me most: islandness and island identity. I embedded myself in the islands of Tasmania and Newfoundland (and their smaller islands) in order to carry out my investigations by experiencing islandness myself and interviewing others whom I identified through their artistic practice as experiencing islandness. Throughout the process I reflected deeply on their words and art as well as my own reactions to them, which then enabled me to describe and give voice to phenomena: the essence, structure, pattern, and meaning of the lived experience. To be able to give voice to any given phenomenon through my own ‘poetising’ became part of an iterative process that engaged me, as interviewer, in the essence of the shared phenomenon. It was truly one of those ‘Aha!’ moments of realization and clarity that added depth and richness to my own experience. Throughout the process I was aware of the phenomenological framework through which I was working, and was conscious of the bigger picture: writing a dissertation that reflected the disparate voices yet drew them together to identify and describe broader, underlying patterns of islandness.

Thus phenomenology lends itself well to the study of islandness—the essence or ‘is-ness’ of islands—as we are able to find threads of similarity and connection between people’s experiences of living on an island.

Because ‘poets and painters are born phenomenologists’ (Bachelard, [1958] 1994: xxviii), I explore this by reference to art and artists’ viewpoints, by interviewing artists as well as arts administrators who engage with psychologies of islandness to provide cultural context. Drawing on the idea that art is a way of knowing—of capturing known and emotionally and psychologically felt and deeply lived experiences (Malpas, 1999: 6)—I consider artistic representations of Newfoundland and Tasmanian culture, and interview their creators. In this way, I see ‘the potential of art as constitutive of dynamic processes of belonging and experiencing place, landscape and subjectivity’ (Hawkins, 2011: 467). As Hay (1994a: 12) has written, the ‘very essence of attachment to place is emotional—as art has always recognised’. Philosopher Jeff Malpas (1999: 4), too, sees this connection: ‘human identity is somehow inseparably bound up with human location ... particularly in its art and literature’; moreover:

the same basic idea of human life as essentially a life of location, of self-identity as a matter of identity found in place, and of places themselves as somehow suffused with the ‘human’, is common to the work of poets and novelists from all parts of the globe and in relation to all manner of landscapes and localities (6).

Artists have the potential ‘to reconfigure our intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual orientation to the world’ (Gablik, 1991: 93). Indeed, using phenomenology we glean a deeper understanding of cultural resistance, which can lead to cultural resilience, by considering the geographies of art and the ways in which they represent intangibles such as place and landscape, experience and emotions, or identity and belonging. At times we better understand the nuances of our own culture only through the critical distance provided by art—in mirroring ourselves back to ourselves through literature, poetry, music, visual art. The intensities with which the nuances—or the ‘ness’ of islandness—are felt by islanders can be used to gauge the strength of island identity. It is in sifting through the intangibles that we find meaning-making in art; through exegesis we can attempt to tease out meaning, and determine whether islandness is central or peripheral in the mind and emotions of the artist—and, likewise, in the emotional reactions of the audience. Through languages of art, then, I make a comparative study of ‘island identity’ on Newfoundland and

Tasmania, and on two of their satellite islands, Fogo Island and Bruny Island. In considering the manifestation of islandness on these smaller islands, other intensities of identity are apprehensible; they are often a more distilled version of that found on the two larger islands.

In addressing the foregoing research agenda, I have made use of a cross-section of theories and concepts, while remaining firmly rooted in phenomenology (Bachelard, [1958] 1994; Cameron, 2003, 2005; Heidegger, 1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 1973; Seamon, 1979, n.d.; van Manen, 1990). These theories and concepts are elaborated on throughout the work, and include material drawn from nissology (Baldacchino, 2004, 2005a, 2006, 2012a; Beer, 2003; DeLoughrey, 2001, 2007; Denning, 1980; Edmond & Smith, 2003; Fletcher, 2011; Goldie, 2011; Hay, 2006, 2013; McCall, 1994; McCusker & Soares, 2011; Stratford, 2003, 2011; Royle, 2001, Dodds & Royle, 2003; Williams, 2012; and others); islandness (as defined by Péron, 2004; Conkling, 2007; Gillis, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2014; Hau‘ofa, 1999; and others); the poetics of space (Bachelard, [1958] 1994); archipelagos (Stratford et al., 2011; and others); aquapelagos (Hayward, 2012; and others); island cultural biogeography (Clark, 2004; Quammen, 1996); identity (Hall, 1997; Porteous, 1990); place theory (Malpas, 1999; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974); emotional geographies and the study of pre-rational thought and emotions (Davidson et al., 2007); performative geography (Fletcher, 2011, and others); betweenness (Entrikin, 1991; Vannini, 2012); art (Gablik, 1991; Hawkins, 2011; et al.); poetic representation or ‘re-presentation’ (Glesne, 1997; Richardson, 2002); poetic inquiry (Prendergast et al., 2009; Butler-Kisber, 2010); ‘nissopoesis’ (Thomas, 2009); autoethnography (Clifford, 1986; Jones, 2002; Glesne, 2011; Bochner & Ellis, 1996, 2002); and storying (Lopez, 1996). I also draw upon the words of other islophiles—people, like me, who have found the lure of the island to be irresistible. Like the waves that wash over an island’s shores, mingling in the tide pools, creating energy and life in the limen, the fluidity of these writings meld into one another, creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

1.3.2. Research question

With Newfoundland and Tasmania coming into their own culturally in recent years—Newfoundland through its vibrant literary and musical scene, and Tasmania through literature, music, and visual art—the question arises: why do these comparable islands have such vibrant cultures? In relation to understanding resilience, noted above as a salient element of the dynamics under study, this question is especially pertinent given their marginal and mendicant reputations.

As Darwin and others have said, islands are laboratories for change. Examining the issue through the lens of Island Studies, then, one could attribute Newfoundland and Tasmania's dynamic cultures to the sometimes-fierce sense of pride and independence that come from living close to the elements in a bounded space, or from the 'specialness' of being set apart from the mainland, or from their storytelling traditions, where they claim and reclaim their stories to ensure their accuracy. But to what extent does islandness factor into what I have come to see as their sense of self-determinism and raucous, feisty, rich cultures—as evidenced in an artistic output that reaches far beyond the islands' shores?

Through the lens of place and attachment to place—in this case, islands—and by looking at representations of Newfoundland and Tasmanian culture, I explore the extent to which attachment to place, island identity, and the prevalence of story (the 'glue' that binds people to their place) play a role in islanders' perceptions of self, individually and collectively. In the face of globalization and cultural homogenization, what can we learn from Tasmanian and Newfoundland artists about living with particularity and maintaining distinctive cultures; about resilience and innovation; about living mindfully, quality of life, island identity, roots and routes; about attachment to place and home; and about the role of story? Based on qualitative research, and through a combination of exegesis of Tasmanian and Newfoundland art (literature, cinema, visual art, performance art, and music), and open-ended, in-depth interviews with the artists, I explore why they find living and creating art on these two islands so attractive and, to some, so necessary. Ultimately, I want to get at the heart of islandness: put words to what Conkling (2007: 191) calls

a ‘metaphysical sensation’, and, in so doing, discover what islands can teach the rest of the world about how cultures change and adapt.⁵

1.3.3 Method

With undergraduate studies in Canadian literature, journalism, and publishing (BA 1993), and a Bachelor of Education degree (1982), I chose literature as my pathway into the interdisciplinary Master of Arts in Island Studies (MAIS) program at University of Prince Edward Island (2007). My thesis was entitled “‘The circumscribed geography of home’: Island Identity in the Fiction of Alistair MacLeod and Wayne Johnston’. While completing that work I became fascinated with the idea of island identity—an under-studied aspect of Island Studies. In 2009 I sought out Pete Hay—who had taught in the MAIS program—to see if he would take me on as a PhD student at University of Tasmania; and he agreed. Noted Island Studies scholar Elaine Stratford agreed to be my secondary supervisor. I then applied for and received an Endeavour International Postgraduate Research Scholarship, which enabled me to devote four years, full-time, to the PhD, starting in June 2010. The proceeds from the sale of my publishing company, Acorn Press, allowed me to travel to Tasmania and Newfoundland.

During the summer of 2010, I researched and wrote papers that I presented at two Island Studies conferences in Bornholm, Denmark, and Ven, Sweden, in August. I continued on to Tasmania, arriving September 4, where I lived with a friend I had made through the Institute of Island Studies at UPEI, and her family. It did not take long before I was embedded in the university and cultural communities. I became a member of the Tasmanian Writers’ Centre and did two public readings; I attended several arts festivals such as MONA FOMA, Ten Days on the Island, and the Tasmanian Poetry Festival in Launceston where I participated in the ‘poetry slam’; I participated in three media interviews, presented at a day-long symposium at the Art School, gave papers at two conferences, and was part of a panel discussion during

⁵ To broaden and deepen my perspective, I also included six interviews with Canadian west-coast island artists, and a writer from Prince Edward Island and one from Tidnish Bridge, Nova Scotia, all of whom engage in writing about islands and islandness.

the cultural festival, Ten Days on the Island. I published essays, poems, and book reviews in three different Tasmanian and Australian publications. I visited various art galleries and museums, including the Tasmanian Art Gallery and Museum in Hobart, the Makers' Workshop in Burnie, the Art Gallery at Dennes Point on Bruny Island, the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Glenorchy, and the convict ruins at Port Arthur. The solid grounding in Island Studies gave me the lens through which to view artistic activity in Tasmania, surveying the contemporary landscape of literature, visual arts, and music, looking for artists who engaged with 'islandness' in their art, either overtly or subconsciously—'through the cracks' (some of which are very wide fissures!).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	BOWL
R. Edmonds	W	1	4	1				
W. Boyles	M	1	1	5	1	6		
V. Pratalad	4	1	W	0	2	2	1	
P. Hay	0-4	1-5	1	1-8	1-12	1-14	1-14	
A. Kelly	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
S. Edmonds	0-2	1-3	1	1-4	W	M	2-4	
P. Plunkett	0-2	0-4	0-5	1-5				
L. Cuff	W	1	1	1	1	1	1	
A. Harwood	W	1	1	1	1	1	1	

Figure 1.1 – *How I learned to love cricket* (photo by the author)

But the accomplishment of which I am most proud? I learned the rules of cricket so that I could fill in as a much-needed scorekeeper for the cricket team, the Thylacinians' XI. Supervisor and cricket captain Pete Hay was my 'way in' to much of the community; he introduced me to key players in the arts community and made sure I was invited to art openings and readings, conferences and symposia, media interviews and publications; and I travelled with Pete and his teammates to cricket

matches from one end of the island to the other. At first I was spending Pete's 'social capital'; in the end, I was adding interest.

Although my research plan was centred around interviews with participants:

In-depth interviews rarely constitute the sole source of data in research. More commonly, they are used in conjunction with data gathered through such avenues as lived experience of the interviewer as a member or participant in what is being studied, naturalistic or direct observation, informal interviewing, documentary records, and team field research. In many cases, researchers use in-depth interviewing as a way to check out theories that have formulated through naturalistic observation, to verify independently (or triangulate) knowledge they have gained through participation as members of particular cultural settings, or to explore multiple meanings of or perspectives on some actions, events, or settings (Johnson, 2002: 104).

By embedding myself in fieldwork in Tasmania and Newfoundland, I was able to bring my own experience to the interviews as a participant-observer through my prior or member-based knowledge as an island-dweller, a 'come from away', and a writer living and practising my own art in both places. As a way of documenting and processing my experiences, I started and maintained a blog, 'tasmania-bound.blogspot.com' – a kind of autoethnography that 'draws from and creates meaningful social milieux' (Clifford, 1986: 6) while 'setting a scene, telling a story, weaving intricate connections among life and art, experience and theory, evocation and explanation' (Jones, 2002:765).

After the University of Tasmania's Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network approved my project (Ethics Ref: H0011648) for 'minimal risk'⁶, I was

⁶ One of the stipulations of the 'minimal risk' application is that I do not include First Nations/Aboriginal participants in my research. As a descendant of white European settlers to North America, I do not believe it is within my right to attempt to research and represent their views. However, where it fits within the context of my research, I have quoted my interviewees' respectful comments about their own engagement with First Nations/Aboriginal peoples and their work, and scholars in their representations of First Nations/Aboriginal history.

privileged to carry out one or two in-depth semi-structured interviews with each of sixteen writers, artists, and musicians in Tasmania, based on a semi-standard list of questions that asked about their personal narratives, their artistic training and accomplishments, how living on an island affected their lives, and how their engagement with ‘islandness’ informed their work, citing specific examples (see Appendix F). My goal was to have ‘the informant become a collaborative partner with the researcher in the intellectual adventure at hand’ (Johnson, 2002: 109).

I shaped the questions to ‘obtain rich material and simultaneously avoid imposing preconceived concepts on it’ while keeping questions open-ended, and remaining alert for ‘interesting leads’ (Charmaz, 2002: 681). I always started with the same question, ‘Tell me about your Tasmania’ or ‘Tell me about your Newfoundland’. I wanted to gauge what the participant felt most important in his/her engagement with the island, and where he/she fitted into it; and I also wanted to see how long it took for him/her to say the word ‘island’. Some said it almost immediately; others many minutes into the interview.

I read the following quotation by geographer Edward Relph (1976: 43), and asked each of them if they agreed with the statement:

There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which we orient ourselves to the world.

The answer was invariably yes. I then asked where that ‘place’ was for them, which generally resulted in a dialogue about why they felt that way.

The question that elicited an almost universal response (‘That’s a good question!’⁷) was: ‘When did you first become aware that you lived on an island?’ The question

⁷ I realise that participants were not necessarily complimenting me on my ability to formulate a particularly good question, but rather their tone was more often nuanced

pressed them to go deeper into memory, to engage with something they perhaps had not thought about before, and it elicited some very rich responses.

I returned home to Prince Edward Island in June 2011, and from there made four separate trips to Newfoundland (July 2011, September 2011, January/February 2012, and September/October 2012). While in St John's in January/February 2012, I was based at the Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Development at Memorial University. I attended numerous concerts, plays, public readings, a literary festival, art exhibition openings; I visited art galleries and museums such as The Rooms, the island's provincial art gallery and museum; participated in a joint meeting of the Memorial and St John's cultural community as a guest of the Harris Centre; and travelled to Fogo Island, off Newfoundland's central north coast, to interview Zita Cobb of the Shorefast Foundation. While in St John's I learned about an arts residency at the Jennifer Keefe Artist Studio on Fogo Island, which is administered by TRACS, the Tilting Recreation and Cultural Society. In September/October 2012 I was invited to be the writer-in-residence, and embedded myself in the culture of Fogo Island for four weeks, participating in various community and arts activities while carrying out my interviews and writing. While there I experienced the insider/outsider phenomenon more acutely than in Tasmania or Newfoundland.

I carried out interviews with twenty-four participants in Newfoundland and on Fogo Island based on the same template of questions I used in Tasmania; I approached some of the participants directly, and others I found through their publishers; still others were the result of the snowball effect. Again, I looked for artists whose work was very much from or of their place, either directly or indirectly.

Ultimately, all but two of the forty-plus participants I approached in both Tasmania and Newfoundland agreed to be interviewed. They were at various stages of their artistic careers, and some were native to their island, while others were 'from away'. Through these in-depth interviews, I elicited deep understandings held by what Johnson (2002: 106) calls 'real-life members of or participants' making art on

to mean, 'Good question!'—as in 'I hadn't thought about that before' or 'I don't know the answer to that, but let me think about it'.

islands; understandings that went ‘beyond commonplace explorations’ and revealed ‘how our commonplace assumptions, practices, and ways of talking partly constitute our interests and how we understand them’ (based on my own history, knowledge, lived experience, and biases that influenced what I, as researcher, was able to ‘hear’). Finally, talking to a wide range of artists and engaging in their art enabled me to gain understandings that ‘allow us to grasp and articulate the multiple views and perspectives on, and meanings of some activity, event, place, or cultural object’.

Within Island Studies, it has been noted that too often islanders have suffered from being ‘objects of [mainlanders’] gaze’ (Baldacchino, 2008: 39). My stance gave me a certain ‘insider knowledge’ that enabled me to move freely, even though I was not a Newfoundlander, Tasmanian, Bruny Islander, or Fogo Islander, and never will be. I was well aware that there are nuances of islandness, of belonging—especially on the smaller islands of Bruny and Fogo Islands—that affect how a researcher is perceived. However, I had several ‘ins’ in both Tasmania and Newfoundland. In addition to Pete Hay, I am friends with Tasmanian artist Michaye Boulter’s family on Prince Edward Island; Michaye knew I was coming before I arrived, and welcomed me as family. Before going to Newfoundland, I had had a longstanding friendship with Dr Rob Greenwood, Director of the Harris Centre in St John’s; through the friendship, and his position, I was welcomed and given an office from which to work. I had also become friends with Bojan Fürst, one of the Harris Centre staff, through another Prince Edward Island work colleague, friend, and tenant (Dave Atkinson and his family rented my house while I was away). Bojan—himself an islander from Croatia—introduced me to his contacts on Fogo Island. Finally, my own writing and publishing credentials within the Canadian publishing industry gave me an ‘in’ with Newfoundland publishers and writers.

While doing the interviews, I was often struck by something my participant would say and would think, ‘that sounds like a poem!’ The feeling happened again while transcribing the interviews, and poems just started ‘popping out’, either as ‘found poems’ (Butler-Kisber, 2010: 84) in the practice of poetic inquiry, or as my own poetic re-imaginings with roots in what Suzanne Thomas (2009: 128) has called ‘nissopoesis’ or ‘island-making’: ‘a search to represent island phenomena, to reveal feelings and essence of experience, while embracing ambiguity, complexity—

leaving spaces open to a multiplicity of meanings and epistemological uncertainty’. As Bachelard ([1958] 1994: xxi) writes: ‘forces are manifested in poems that do not pass through the circuits of knowledge’. In many fields of research study, disseminating one’s qualitative research findings in ways other than standard academic prose is a ‘viable method for seeing beyond social scientific conventions and discursive practices’ (Richardson, 2002: 877); after all, science ‘is one lens, creative arts another. Do we not see more deeply through two lenses?’ (888). Similarly, in what Corrine Glesne (2011: 250) calls ‘poetic transcription’, I fashion ‘poem-like pieces from the words of participants [in order to] get at the essence of what’s said, the emotions expressed, and the rhythm of speaking’. I create a ‘third voice’ that is a combination of both interviewer and participant, ‘disintegrat[ing] any appearance of separation between observer and observed’.

Re-imagining academic research through the creative lens offers contextual understanding and insight, and gives the potential to access and share research material and conclusions—such as emotionally charged content or deeply personal stories—in ways that might not be possible through purely academic avenues. In a way that ‘honours the interviewee [participant] in a blending of artistic and social scientific analysis’ (Richardson, 2002: 885), artistic representations of research findings have the possibility of ‘doing for social research what conventional social representation cannot’ (887). Thus, excerpts from the twenty-some poems I have written are included in the dissertation; poems in their entirety can be found in Appendix A.

I coded the interviews using a matrix I created based on the Tasmanian interviews, which held up and remained consistent through the Newfoundland interviews. I knew I had carried out enough interviews when I reached the saturation point of the same things continuously repeated. I was then able to group some eighty-five codes into twenty-six sub-themes, which in turn were organised into this introduction and eight other chapters preceding the conclusion. Layered over those are three overarching themes of geographical, emotional/psychological, and societal boundedness—all of which are tied together by narratives from the islanders themselves. Data analysis—acknowledging that ‘informants differ greatly in their intelligence, knowledge, and ability to reflect’ (Johnson, 2002: 110)—was carried

out with my research question firmly front-of-mind. I also ‘provide accounts or explanations of how this selection [of whom to include in findings] was done in specific projects so that readers may assess the researchers’ findings’ (Johnson, 2002: 111). In summary, I have followed an abductive approach to my analysis, including what Mason (2002: 180) calls an ‘interpretive tradition and ... process of moving between everyday concepts and meanings, lay accounts, and social science explanations’.

1.3.4 The writing

The dissertation combines scholarly writing—with interpretation and explicit quotation from papers published in books and journals—and autoethnographic writing based on ethnography as ‘the analysis of implicit knowledge and everyday practices’ (Clifford, 1986: 3), beginning with ‘the self, the personal biography’ (Glesne, 2011: 247) and then saying ‘something about the larger cultural setting and scholarly discourse’ (Glesne, 2011: 247). This approach as autoethnographer allowed me to use my own ‘unique voicing—complete with colloquialisms, reverberations from multiple relationships, and emotional expressiveness’, allowing readers to ‘gain a sense of [me] the writer as a full human being’ (Gergen and Gergen, 2002:14). As Carolyn Ellis (1996: 16) notes: ‘Ethnography is what ethnographers *do*. It’s an activity. Ethnographers inscribe patterns of cultural experience; they give perspective on life. They interact, they take note, they photograph, moralize, and write’. Ethnography breaks down barriers between social sciences and the humanities (Bochner and Ellis, 1996: 18), something that is well-suited to the interdisciplinary nature of island studies, and mirrors a phenomenological methodology that uses writing to ‘express the way the world can be perceived, felt, and lived’.

This bricolage and my experiences as both an islander and non-islander inform my research and understanding of the phenomenon of island living. I have quoted extensively from interviews, allowing participants’ words to illustrate the points I am making while situating them within the context of myself as participant-observer (Clifford, 1986: 1). Like researchers who ‘use literary techniques to portray dramatically their experience (Glesne, 2011: 247), I have written exegeses on the basis of my response to select writing, music, and visual art. I have also included

ekphrases or poetic representations of the interviews. Finally, I have introduced many of the chapter sections with excerpts from my aforementioned poems.

Finally, just as homesickness can be called a pathology, I have found that we can suffer from symptoms of ‘islandness’, too. Indeed, parts of this dissertation have been written through the lens of being homesick for my island. Pete Hay told me it would be thus within hours of my arrival in Tasmania. But it came as a complete surprise when I returned home to Prince Edward Island to find that I was homesick for Tasmania, and Bruny Island—and the same homesickness hit me when I got back to PEI from Newfoundland, and Fogo Island. So it is because of home—or more specifically, my attachment to all of my island homes—places that I have given of myself—that I realised I had become what Lawrence Durrell (1953) called an *islomaniac*—someone who ‘finds islands somehow irresistible’.

1.4 The chapters

Next, I introduce the reader to the idea of studying islands as a specific place in Chapter 2, ‘Tale of two islands’. I move from ‘place’ to ‘island place’ by providing an overview of my two primary research islands, Newfoundland and Tasmania. Thereafter the prevailing themes of boundedness are explored: geographical (Chapters 3 and 4), psychological (Chapters 5, 6, and 7), and societal (Chapters 8 and 9).

Chapter 3, ‘The rote of the sea’, begins with defining ‘island’ before introducing the role that water plays in defining islands and islandness. The chapter explores geographical boundedness; how the sea gives and takes; and how physical aspects of the sea become creative muses—such as waves and tides, light and weather, the edge and the horizon.

Chapter 4, ‘The crossing’, discusses the role of boats in island culture. It provides a step-by-step analysis of ‘The crossing’ by boat, using a phenomenological approach to the experience of leaving one’s island home for the mainland, then returning home again. The chapter also addresses how the nature of crossing to an island has changed with the advent of air travel.

Chapter 5, ‘Thank God we’re surrounded by water: The psychology of islandness’, explores the psychological effects of being bounded on (and to) an island. Yet, with boundedness comes connectedness, an essential component of islandness. The chapter also explores the nuances of centrality and peripherality and how they affect islanders’ sense of islandness; home and belonging; the power of imprinting; homesickness; geology and time; and the poetics of island space.

In Chapter 6, I show how artists take inspiration from their islands in ‘Inspiring islands’, providing an exegesis of their work as well as looking at how the ‘narrative cartographies’ from Newfoundland and Tasmania have provided rich fodder for creative expression.

In Chapter 7, ‘The island mystic/que’, I explore how, in centuries past, islands have been regarded as sacred sites, whereas now, for some islanders, islands provide a kind of ‘secular spirituality’. The chapter also looks at the nature of island as metaphor, as well as a discussion of ‘the other’.

Chapter 8 explores ‘Societal islandness’, which is what occurs when you put independent-spirited people who are attracted to island living into a bounded community. The result is often a resilience that is based on ingenuity, community and kinship networks upon which you must depend in order to survive, and coping strategies—not the least of which is a sense of humour.

Chapter 9 wrestles with ways of ‘Commodifying islandness’: strategies that island artists have used to enable them to make a living from their art. The chapter includes two case studies: the work of the Shorefast Foundation on Fogo Island, Newfoundland; and the international cultural festival, *Ten Days on the Island*, in Tasmania.

And, finally, my Chapter 10, ‘Conclusion’, provides a summation, a synthesis of the themes, the significance of the work, and possible agenda for further research.

Chapter 2 A tale of two islands

2.1 From ‘place’ to ‘island place’

Sense of place and belonging are profound human needs, as Edward Relph (1976: 41) suggests when he observes that a ‘deep relationship with place is as necessary as close relationships with people; without such relationships human existence is bereft of much of its significance’. Yi-Fu Tuan (1974: 114-5) also writes of places where people experience strong attachment—forests, mountains, and deserts—and then posits that the ‘ideal places’ that have ‘persistent appeal’ in human imagination are ‘the seashore, the valley, and the island’. The seashore may have been where humankind began, and the island is often imbued with deep spiritual meanings, particularly in early civilisations where sometimes it is the seat of the gods.

And just as geography is what Tuan calls ‘a mirror for man [sic]—reflecting and revealing human nature and seeking order and meaning in the experiences that we have of the world’, so, too, is an island its own geography, its own mirror—with the mirror’s frame the bounded yet permeable water’s edge. The defined edge of the island thus provides a natural limit, concentrating that sense of belonging in what is knowable, intimate. ‘Being geographically defined and [archetypically] circular, an island is easier to hold, to own or manipulate as much as to embrace and to caress’ (Baldacchino, 2005a: 247). Tasmanian painter Richard Wastell (2011: n.p.) echoes this observation when he says, ‘I think it’s a real human want to just know where your boundaries are—where one thing starts and another ends ... a human necessity, really’.

While an island may come down to the basics—land surrounded by water—how people define ‘island’ often reflects how they interact with their island, adding nuances to the definition. In this vein, islanders seem particularly adept at producing imaginative definitions of islands, incorporating what sometimes is deep and intimate knowledge of their bounded places, emotional connections they have to islands, and stories that bind them to island places. Take the Scottish definition, for instance: ‘An island is any place surrounded by water that claims enough pasture to graze one sheep for a year’ (Fischer, 2012: 10).

Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.), philanthropist and founder of the Shorefast Foundation and Fogo Island Arts Corporation, grew up on Fogo Island. She quotes Tim Robinson, who has written extensively about Ireland's Aran Islands, saying, '[islands] hold the promise of a comprehensible totality'. For her, Fogo Island was the only world she knew: 'surrounded by water, kind of a moat, off of Newfoundland' (2012: n.p.). Prince Edward Island's Anne Compton (in Acorn, 2002: 33) refers to 'the tension between bounded space and boundless sea', calling this 'the very definition of an island'. Tasmania's Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.) says, 'If you're an islander, you can't really see yourself objectively. You just are who you are'. Artist Jean-Yves Vigneau, who lives in Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Canada, is perhaps more poetic: 'My island is not merely a parcel of land surrounded by water; it is the focal point of all my horizons' (Vigneau, n.d.).

Being able to recognise when you first became aware that you live on an island is difficult for some—akin to being conscious that you are breathing. Tasmanian photographer Hillary Younger (2011: n.p.) says she first became aware of her island 'when I first became aware of being confined by it'. Similarly, Tasmanian composer Don Kay (2011: n.p.) knew he was on an island because he and his family had to sail across Bass Strait to visit relatives: 'I went to Melbourne on the *Taroona* ... which was a liner going from Burnie to Melbourne, just before the war, when I was six years old. So I certainly knew it was an island before then'. Newfoundland writer and actor Andy Jones (2012: n.p.) calls it an islander 'sensitivity', and islands

are little worlds unto themselves in a kind of way. People had to do everything for themselves because they were on an island, so it's hard to get things there. And it made a huge difference I'm sure—like to me, in Nova Scotia, you could drive down the road to America. You could actually get on the road, eventually you could walk to get to New York. We were a different country, also, so we couldn't just leave. So we had to figure out what to do ourselves. So the fact that we were an island and that we were a country probably went hand in hand.

At the heart of one's awareness is the realisation that you have to cross water in order to leave, which takes a more concerted effort than just jumping in the car and driving

to wherever you need to go. Says Newfoundland-based poet Don McKay (2012: n.p.):

Because an island is already defined as a place because of the radical division between water and land, it might be easier to identify it as a separate place. Part of this ‘surrounded by water’ defines you as Newfoundlanders, Fogo Islanders, or Marachene Islanders or whatever. Whereas on the mainland, the ecosystem shades into another ecosystem ... and with urbanization, the place may be just smudged. And places get lost.

In populated areas, rural areas become subsumed by urban sprawl; suburbs blend into cities as boundaries spread—but on islands—sea level rise notwithstanding—this sprawl can only go so far: the boundary is fixed, and seems immutable. Writer and arts administrator Thea Morash (2012: n.p.) compares crossing other provincial boundaries to leaving an island province: ‘There is, I think, a much more noticeable idea of separation ... like you lift out of one place and drop down in another place’. Morash remembers when she learned that not everyone in Canada was on an island, and how being a Newfoundlander made her feel different:

I think it was more so the idea that I didn’t realise that everybody else did, too. It’s like, we’re this island, and we have to get on a boat or a plane to get to wherever, Montreal or Toronto. But the idea that Ontario wasn’t also an island, or that Quebec wasn’t also an island and that we weren’t all just a bunch of islands. Even though I think I’ve known about our islandness forever, it was probably only later on that I realised that differentiated us in some meaningful way from the mainland.

Because islands are entities unto themselves, they have often, throughout history, been equated with property, fulfilling the colonial or imperialist fantasy (Edmond & Smith, 2003: 1). Newfoundland poet Mary Dalton (2012: n.p.) describes her own fantasy of owning an island—symbolising control of one’s world like Robinson Crusoe:

to buy your island. That has great appeal to me. That’s the ultimate retreat, isn’t it? It’s one form of imagining, like others, but it’s kind of creating a

minimalist scenario for yourself. Maybe it's the ultimate control fantasy. You have your own world. What is there, you create. There'd be no committees! It's like a desert isle in your fantasy.

Indeed, there are now popular glossy magazines devoted to buying and selling islands.

Small islands off Newfoundland's coast offer further scope for defining 'island'.

Dalton says that from her summer place on Conception Bay, NL:

I can look out and see Bell Island, and I see Kelly's Island, which is the smaller island to the right of Bell Island. I have a daily consciousness of islands when I'm out there. The island there says to me, you're there and I'm here. I can't explain that—at once it beckons, I'm other and I'm different from you. It's the visible.

Newfoundland writer Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.) believes that people on Fogo Island are 'their own island, they don't even seem to talk about Newfoundland. It feels like a country'. Writer Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) notes that some people feel that 'Bell Island is to Newfoundland what Newfoundland is to Canada, just a little bit stranger, a little bit weirder, just a little bit more fun'. And because so many of these small islands were resettled in the 1960s, they hold particular significance to many Newfoundlanders. Says writer Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.):

Resettlement really is an important theme here. It's part of the continuing grievance of not only being an islander but being somebody off the island forced to come into a more corporate identity. Unless you've been here for a little while and you come to understand how important the islands are to the people and to the literature, you would think it's just an island, plain and simple.

Growing up on or near the water can be a factor in defining one's sense of islandness. But for Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.), who grew up in the mining town of Buchans, in central Newfoundland, it is cultural, measured against outsiders or mainlanders—the gulf between islanders and mainlanders created by the Gulf of St Lawrence:

It was just the sense that people had around me of the islandness of Newfoundland, and of the separateness and distinctiveness of it. Part of what made that so clear to me was the otherness of other places. And that going anywhere outside of Newfoundland was such a massive undertaking. It was hard to get anywhere else because we were an island. And that when people left it was so hard to come back because we were an island.

Crummey notes that his sense of islandness was reinforced psychologically by the comings and goings of relatives, particularly cousins of the same age who were born on the mainland:

My mom's sister and her family moved to Ontario before I was born. So I didn't meet those cousins until I was ten or eleven. I had a very real sense of them being something different than us because they were mainlanders. So all of that kind of talk really established for me a sense of islandness. And I don't know if I had a real sense of that as a physical thing, but certainly as a psychological thing I was aware of that from the beginning.

While Owe Ronström (2009: 176) suggests that the preposition one uses to describe one's location on an island depends on the size of the land mass involved, if 'island' is in the island's name, one will use the word 'on' when saying where they are. For example, 'one' is 'on Prince Edward Island' or 'on Bruny Island'. But if the word 'island' is not in the name, one would use the word 'in', as 'in Tasmania' or 'in Newfoundland'. That distinction does not mean that a Newfoundlander does not identify him or herself as an islander, however. Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) says 'islander ... is inherent in that phrase, that a Newfoundlander is an islander'.

In Tasmania, the word 'islander' may not be as deeply internalised as it is in Newfoundland.⁸ As Hay says (in Thomas, 2010: n.p.):

⁸ It would be worthy of future study to examine telephone books on both islands over a set period of time, looking to see how many businesses incorporate 'island' or 'isle' (or some variation) into their names, measuring how people's awareness of their island status has changed over time.

If you turn on the television news and there's the weather anchor telling you what's going to happen, they'll tell you tomorrow it will rain over the State. And I get very angry because the State is a constitutional fiction. The State is the houses of parliament and the apparatus of government. So what they're telling me is that it's going to rain on the police stations and the state schools and the public roads. But they're not telling me whether it's going to rain over my house, or over someone's farm, or over the vast area of biophysical Tasmania. I want them to say it's raining over the island—because they're talking about a geographic entity, not a constitutional entity. But the fact that it doesn't sit at the front of their brain—I'm using it because it emblemises how we speak—whereas Prince Edward Islanders would talk about the island, we talk about the State. And we shouldn't be. We should be talking about the island.

Both Newfoundland and Tasmania are archipelagic in form, surrounded by hundreds of satellite islands (Natural Resources Canada, 2012; Geoscience Australia, 2013), some inhabited but mostly not. Tasmania's Rees Campbell (2011: n.p.) does much of her writing at Montagu, on Tasmania's northwest coast, looking out to Little Hummock Island. She says she only feels like she's on an island when she's looking out to another:

Tasmania is possibly too big to feel [one is on an island] ... and also because I've always been here, and it's my entire world ... that I don't see it as being constrained ... but the little islands are so demonstrably constrained that they are more islandish to me.

Tasmanian writer Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) echoes this idea:

I think about the other islands as 'the islands'. I think that Maria, Flinders, Cape Barren, Bruny, Huon Island, Hope, Faith, and Charity. And I think I have positioned myself now so fully on Tasmania as a mainland, that the other islands have become the islands to me. I think for me now that even Tasmania

is too big for me to get my head around. Particularly since I've had children, my roaming around the island has shrunk down to where I hang here in the south. So I'm looking out at other islands. It doesn't sort of matter what I'm on the edge of. I'm on the edge of something, still looking out.

Being conscious of one's islandness in order to define 'island' is an oft-debated subject within the Island Studies discourse.⁹ Defining 'small island' is what Eric Clark (2009: 60) calls 'notoriously arbitrary ... the less tangible but no less significant dimension of consciousness is also invoked to narrow in on small islands, namely, those islands where the inhabitants are permanently conscious of being on an island'. So while Greenland is the world's largest island in land mass at 2,166,086 km², its small population of 56,282 (Statistics Greenland) shares characteristics of islandness that include physical, emotional/psychological, and social boundedness, along with the challenges that accompany being far removed from its colonial overseer, Denmark. At the other end of the spectrum, the highly open metropole of Manhattan, at 59.5 km², is one of the most densely populated islands in the world with a population of 1,626,159 (US Census Bureau, 2014); it is also at the other end of the spectrum in terms of boundedness and remoteness. In the literature, definitions of 'small' in terms of population include ranges from less than a million to less than 100,000 to even lower (Clark, 2009: 60). Even the myriad islands in the Pacific Ocean, thought by the rest of the populace to be mere specks, were considered massive by their traditional inhabitants when taken in their totality with the surrounding ocean, 'refuting the idea of islands as isolated outcrops of meaning in an immense oceanic void' (Edmond & Smith, 2003: 2). In his book *Desert Islands*, Walter de la Mare (1930: 18) notes that in searching for an island 'worthy of romantic respect'—one that 'invites the soul'—'one pines for something a little more in proportion to one's own few inches'. The unsettled question of what constitutes

⁹ Indeed, the membership of the International Small Island Studies Association (ISISA) has debated deleting the word 'Small' from their name during biennial meetings in Bornholm (2010) and British Virgin Islands (2012). To date, motions to change the name have been defeated. As a member, I perceive that the membership regards the word 'small' as being inclusive enough to incorporate those who wish to be members, and it sees no stigma in defining its member islands as 'small'.

smallness in the context of my research, then, was often reflected on by the artistic practitioners interviewed for this project, especially in the case of those who had experience of islands smaller than their own.

For instance, Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) defines a small island as one:

that you can easily get around in an ordinary day of human life. [Islands] are knowable, and if they're knowable, then they're lovable. And you can't love something you don't know. To be knowable you have to be able to, in an ordinary day, touch all of its sides. And Little Fogo Island—it's the homeland. It's the real thing. It's closer to the fishing grounds, and it's more naked than here. Little Fogo Island—it takes a nanosecond when you're out there ... [and] everything becomes clearer. The most important thing becomes much clearer.

Newfoundland photographer Bojan Fürst (2012: n.p.) feels one's definition of a small island depends on one's state of mind: 'A small island is any island whose people feel they live on a small island'. In turn, expatriate Newfoundland poet John Steffler (2013: n.p.) says an island has been traditionally thought of as a microcosm because of the way people lived 'prior to mass communications', where communities were forged face to face:

An island has tended ... to include small versions of the elements that go into making any big place ... to be autonomous. But going back in time, every island had bits and pieces of everything that people needed. They provided that stuff for themselves. [An] island is ... reduced, but contains all its parts. It allows you, almost in a fairy tale way, to sample everything from high to low, everything and everybody from the equivalent to the king down to the pauper, from the farmer to the tinker. So you can have a very rich, very broad human experience just within a day. There'd be a whole spectrum of people all in one room. That's part of the island experience.

Just because an island is *perceived* as a totality, its components are not necessarily connected by well-integrated infrastructure. Newfoundland dancer and choreographer Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.) says that:

to me we are many islands, because we had these huge isolated bays. In the '60s it started dying out. [We] finished The Drive in '65, we had the highway going across when my parents moved here. For them, they arrived just at the time that Newfoundland was getting connected.

Until 1965, when 'The Drive' or highway linking Newfoundland's west coast to the east was completed, Newfoundland was a disparate series of outports that dotted the island's immense coastline. In the early days of settlement, these fishing villages were connected by merchant-owned boats that collected salt fish and dropped off supplies; steamer service (often sporadic) came later. Moyes echoes geographer Andrew Harwood (2011: 94) when he describes Tasmania as a series of islands within an island; he writes 'the "archipelagic" nature of islands forces a repetition that disrupts the stabilised ordering of island spatiality in terms of a bounded, unified island'. Within Tasmania's capital city, Hobart, the main divide runs east-west, and is colloquially known as 'the latte line', separating the arts-and-culture postmodern character of south-central Hobart from the socially conservative industrial and lower-income suburbs to the north. A similar character-defining line is located at, roughly, the village of Ross on the main line of road between the capital and the second city of Launceston, where affluence is more concentrated in private-sector businesses.

Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.) a resident of the Tasmanian Midlands living not far from Ross, comments on this sharp divide:

Within Tasmania there's a really big division between the north and the south. The north all seem to be rednecks, we want to develop and build pulp mills, and we farm. It's traditionally been the end of the island that's always been like that, a more commercial viewpoint. There's also certain energy and freedoms that are associated with that mentality, as opposed to the sort of dogma of the State. There's certainly a freedom that is associated with this end of the island for me. Every time I drive up the Midlands Highway and I get to Tunbridge, and those hills, I go, 'Ahhh!!'

Tasmanian Don Kay (2011: n.p.), who grew up in Stanley in the northwest, points to a geographical elaboration of this perceived differentiation:

The capital for us in the far northwest of Tasmania was not Hobart so much as Melbourne [the capital of Victoria across the Bass Strait]. The radio reception was much clearer because of the mountains in between, Hobart was more difficult to get on the radio, I think. So that was part of that. We had sort of disdain for Hobart up there. There was a strong parochialism—I went to boarding school in Launceston, so northwest vs. north is strong as well, but north vs. south is particularly strong. So I feel like I belong to the whole island, having lived in Hobart longer than anywhere.

For John Cameron (2011: n.p.)—place scholar, essayist, and former professor of social ecology now retired to Bruny Island—living on the south part of an island off the island of Tasmania is like being inside a Russian nesting doll, leaving him wondering about the definition of ‘mainland’. For him, the mainland is another island:

I identify much more strongly as a Bruny Islander than I do as a Tasmanian. When I talk about the mainland, well that’s the mainland across the channel, that’s Tasmania. Which is funny, because then what is the rest of Australia? There’s all these jokes down here—well it’s [mainland Australia] the north island. It’s an even more mainland thing. So I don’t really identify as much as being a Tasmanian as an islander ... I’m sort of aware that is the next layer of the nesting, but it’s not nearly as well-developed for me.

Such geographical particularity within islands is in flux. In the last fifty years, changes in transportation structures have changed life irrevocably on the islands, and definitions created from intra-island remoteness are constantly undergoing revision, sometimes in surprising ways. As observed by Newfoundland storyteller Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.):

Places like Fogo Island or Change Islands—we sometimes think of Newfoundland being isolated in some ways, and certainly those islands are one step removed. Especially since the introduction of roads and whatnot, it’s become harder to get to. At one point I don’t think that places like Change Islands and Fogo Island would have been any more isolated than any other community because, before roads, everyone travelled by boat. But for the past

half-century, some of these places, as people shifted away from boats towards roads, in the '60s, those places have become little pockets of culture in some ways.

Jarvis points to Bell Island, which has a different settlement pattern:

A lot of people in Bell Island work off Bell Island, so people go away in the days and work and then return. So people are much more dependent on life off-island. They are not as isolated as some communities. So maybe that has had an impact on how they survive culturally.

Perceptions of island-mainland relationships are also constantly undergoing revision and, as John Cameron observes (see above), how a relationship to a mainland is configured is very much person- and site-specific. For writer Françoise Enguehard (2012: n.p.), who grew up on St Pierre et Miquelon, the mainland 'is mainland France. It's what we call Metropolitan France. The rest is Canada or Newfoundland'. She says:

We have an interesting relationship with Newfoundland. It is the only piece of land we see, the south coast of Newfoundland. We call it the coast, *La côte*, going to *la côte*. It's close, it's like step-brothers, step-daughters, step-sisters. We share a lot of blood. A lot of people—even my family—has ... ancestors from the south coast. If you look at the history, whenever the French would take possession, they'd bring back the English to Fortune, and whenever they had heard we had left or we had been kicked out, they would move their cows and their hogs back to St Pierre. St Pierre was a haven at a time when in Newfoundland they had nothing ... When [my father] was a young man he would say that a lot of people died never seeing the colour of a \$1 bill ... And even the poorest people in St Pierre could consider themselves fortunate compared to Newfoundlanders. So it's a very close relationship.

The preceding narratives illuminate some of the ways in which islanders in both Newfoundland and Tasmania have comparable ways of defining 'island' in terms of how they view their own islands, and the islands off those islands. They are special places—sometimes similar, sometimes contradictory—yet each has an ongoing story

that creates attachment to their place. At this point, it is useful to more fully and substantively justify why these two island groups are the focus of the present work.

2.2 Poles apart: Tasmania and Newfoundland

Although one would think that two islands on opposite sides of the planet would be dissimilar, the opposite is true: the linkages and similarities are striking. These links go back to the time of explorer James Cook who surveyed much of Newfoundland's coast between 1763 and 1767—including the Bay of Islands near Corner Brook in 1767 and whose name appears there, with 'Cook's Cove' and 'Cook's Brook'. A decade later he was on the other side of the world: in 1777, he landed his ship, *The Adventure*, at a place named for the ship: Adventure Bay on Tasmania's Bruny Island.

Other similarities exist. Both islands were entangled in processes of colonisation from the British Isles: Tasmania in 1803 and Newfoundland in 1824. Tasmania gained self-government in 1856 (Boyce, 2010) and Newfoundland won responsible government in 1855 (Cadigan, 2009). Both became sub-national island jurisdictions (with Newfoundland also laying claim to Labrador on the mainland) within a larger federation: Tasmania a state of Australia in 1901, and Newfoundland a province of Canada in 1949 (which also laid claim to Labrador on the mainland). Although the *island*¹⁰ of Newfoundland's land mass is nearly double that of Tasmania (Newfoundland, 111,390 km²; Tasmania, 68,331 km²), the populations are almost the same; (Tasmania, 510,600 [ABS, 2011]; Newfoundland, 511,722 [Statistics Canada a, 2011]). The shortest distance from Tasmania to the mainland is 240 km; and from Newfoundland, 178 km.

Both have been viewed as problematic for and by their colonial rulers and later national governments (and by other state and provincial leaders and populations).

¹⁰ ... while mainland Labrador is 294,330 km², for a total of 405,720 km² for the entire province of Newfoundland and Labrador (Tourism NLb; n.d.).

Heavily dependent on natural resource industries, both islands have been characterized as ‘have-not’ areas of their nations,¹¹ with their island status exacerbating their peripherality—the further from the centre, the higher the cost of maintaining services, with transportation and unemployment being major factors. In addition, over many years Tasmanians have exhibited what appears to be a ‘cultural cringe’ in which things Tasmanian seem to be unfavourably compared to similar things on the mainland; and Newfoundlanders have manifest an inferiority complex (Pocius, 1996; Johnston, 2009: 22-23). Both islands have carried the stigma of the genocide of their original inhabitants and the attendant shame of causing significant disruptions to the cultural practices of surviving groups of Aboriginals in Tasmania and the Beothuks in Newfoundland. Both settler populations have decimated the natural environment and caused mass extinctions of species such as the Great Auk in Newfoundland and the Thylacine in Tasmania.

Perhaps because of these comparable experiences and circumstances, these ‘mirror islands’ (Polack, 2012) have been referred to as the ‘psychological sink into which the fears, self-loathings and insecurities of the larger nation are displaced’ (Hay, 2006: 27). Newfoundland writer Wayne Johnston (2012: n.p.) says simply, ‘If you look at Australia then look south, you’ll see Australia’s equivalent of Newfoundland. That’s Tasmania’.

Yet, both islands have experienced cultural renaissance in recent decades, with islanders and others capitalising on the peripherality of the two islands and on a sense of pride in place to create rich cultures that are distinctive *because of* that

¹¹ Newfoundland’s status as a ‘have-not’ province changed in 2008 to a ‘have’ province, when oil revenues ensured that they paid, for the first time, into the federal government’s equalization program rather than receive equalization payments that ensure comparable levels of public service are provided across the country (CBC, 2008).

isolation. An expatriate Tasmanian now working in Newfoundland, Fiona Polack¹² (2010: 79), notes that in the:

last quarter of the twentieth century, the margin became the centre of attention. The shift to late capitalism ascribed new value to the local, the 'authentic' and the niche. In Tasmania this phenomenon coincided with the rise of a homegrown Green movement, and the return to prominence of the island's Aboriginal people, who successfully fought for possession of Truganini's remains at the 1976 centenary of her death. The confluence of these global and local factors altered Tasmania irrevocably. From being a place writers like Peter Conrad could not leave fast enough, it became one others gravitated to.

Indeed, Tasmania's current place in the artistic world led Hobart's daily newspaper, *The Mercury*, to editorialise: 'Artistically Tasmania is no longer at the end of the earth but at the centre. It is a conceptual shift of Copernican proportions' (2011: 22). Residents and incomers alike recognise and celebrate the lifestyle associated with living on these islands. Both fit into the category of 'exotic' places to live and visit: not because of the typical sun, sea, and sand tourism associated with warm water islands, but rather for their rugged natural beauty and pristine shorelines, and their rich cultural heritage.

Popular with outdoor enthusiasts for its easy access to the wilderness, Tasmania is also known beyond its shores for the 'stain' of convictism, for Errol Flynn, the Tasmanian Devil, and 'two-headed Tasmanian' incest jokes, and for being the global birthplace of the Green Party, born of disputes over destructive damming practices in the 1970s. Despite the 'many Tasmanias' that people might think of in relation to this island, the state government's tourism agency has a 'Brand Tasmania' focus that centres on a 'clean, green' Tasmania, celebrating pristine wilderness and clean air, distinctive foods and wines, culture and heritage (Discover Tasmania, 2011). Here, we are told, 'Tasmania's more relaxed pace of life, lack of pretension, and energetic

¹² Polack teaches English at Memorial University in St John's. Her work is among the first scholarly examination of the rich comparisons between these two islands; her PhD dissertation from University of Tasmania is 'Littoral Fictions: Writing Tasmania and Newfoundland' (2002).

and connected art scene has attracted writers, artists and performers. While we may have less than three per cent of Australia's population, we are home to nine per cent of its artists'. Similarly, the Discover Tasmania website has a slogan across it that underlines the islandness of the place: 'There's a place where you'll arrive curious and walk away enriched—*and it's just across the water*' (emphasis added).

Marketers capitalize on an exoticism that mystifies many mainland Australians, a difference made even more striking by having to cross Bass Strait to get there.

Similarly, on Newfoundland the natural environment is a distinguishing feature, along with 'cultural heritage and traditional way of life' (Overton, 1996: 136). It is known that the island's first inhabitants were the Innu and Inuit who occupied it seasonally. Around the eleventh century, Newfoundland was one of the earliest ports of call for the Vikings (in particular, Leif the Lucky). In 1497, John Cabot claimed it for the English, and as happened in Tasmania, European settlers went on to 'eradicate' the Beothuk and their culture in the early nineteenth century either by means of violence or disasters of epidemiology (Janzen, 2014; Polack, 2012). In the 1500s, English, French, Portuguese, and Basque fishermen began fishing North Atlantic cod to such an extent that Newfoundland was referred to in the 1700s as a 'great imperial ship moored near the Grand Banks' (Felt & Locke, 1995: 202). Eventually seasonal fishing turned to year-round settlement around the coast, and since the little islands around the big island were even closer to the fish, people settled on them as well. Over the centuries, Newfoundland's coastline and offshore islands became dotted with 'outports' accessible only by boat. Newfoundland is thus known for the cod fishery (and its collapse in 1992), the sealing industry (and the protests against it), and, recently, the wealth generated by offshore oil; wild weather, maritime disasters, and the hundreds of soldiers who lost their lives at the Battle of Beaumont Hamel in the First World War; its distinctive time zone ('a half-hour later in Newfoundland') and the Newfoundland dog; and for being Canada's newest province, only joining Confederation within living memory in 1949.

Although tourists have been enjoying Newfoundland's rugged beauty since the mid-1800s, Newfoundland still represents a romanticized notion of an earlier, more 'primitive' time that eschews modernity in relation to particular places and particular visitor experiences (Overton, 1996: 8). The tremendous growth in Newfoundland

literature, television, movies, music, and art in the 1970s and 1980s signifies a cultural revival (Overton, 1996: 48) that feeds off a Newfoundland ‘nationalism’ that is fed by resistance to a narrow victory in the 1948 referendum that led to Newfoundland joining Confederation (52–48 per cent in favour of this change) (Cadigan, 2009: 237). Many Newfoundlanders still believe that the island would have been better off maintaining its independence.

Newfoundlanders may not have political independence, but in recent years they have been seen by many Canadians as having arguably the most distinctive culture outside that of Quebec, bucking the trend toward a culturally homogeneous North America, or indeed, world. As with Tasmania’s claim to be a thriving cultural destination, government agencies of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador declare similarly: ‘St John’s is fast becoming the cultural capital of Canada with one of the highest concentrations of writers, musicians, actors, and comedians on a per capita basis’ (Tourism NLa, n.d.). Research on St John’s as a ‘creative city’ highlights its ‘relative size and (dis)connection of St John’s within provincial, national and international networks of places’ (Lepawsky et al, 2010: 325) and suggests that ‘there is a dual character to St John’s—as both metropole and margin—that plays a critical role in its ability to attract and retain talent’ (Lepawsky et al, 2010: 343). Underlying the message is that Newfoundland is just isolated enough to be real.

The histories of both islands are signposted with defining moments that have helped shape islanders’ identities and influenced the contemporary quest for cultural agency, self-determination, and ‘the possibility of defining themselves and of articulating their own concerns and interests’ (Baldacchino, 2008: 39). These defining moments invariably become thematic preoccupations in cultural expression such as books, movies, drama, and in the visual arts. The sense of history, and the stories that accompany it, are critical to islanders, helping to bind them to their place—and to each other. Yva Momatiuk calls Newfoundlanders ‘a tenacious lot, drawn together for centuries out of necessity but still fiercely independent—occasionally of one another, more often of the rest of the world’ (Momatiuk, 1998: 9). In Newfoundland, art curator Bruce Johnson (2012: n.p.) sees a sense of history that he does not experience on the mainland: ‘I’ve come across a gravestone that might be from 1870 or 1850 that’s completely tended. People go back there every year. Nobody knows

who the person is other than their stories: “Well, it’s Great Uncle Jack or something”. Four or five or six generations, and someone’s going back there to whippersnip the grave’. He notes:

[The island’s] gone from feudalism to postmodernism in two generations. It’s been left alone for four hundred years. So it was isolated—though it’s not anymore. I think it’s different from PEI. It’s similar to Tasmania: I like that relationship between Tasmania’s hatred of Australia’s rule and Newfoundland’s attitude toward Canada, and how that translates into the common mythologies of our relationship with the country. It’s also strange because on July 1 here [it] is Memorial Day until noon, then it’s Canada Day. It’s two nationalities at play. In the morning you see the tri-colours ... very nationalistic, strong memory of something that happened ninety-odd years ago. And then at noon, all the Canadian flags go up, and people barbecue and drink ... It’s been a Galapagos. People come here ... to study the language, because it hasn’t changed radically since Shakespeare. Irish studies, English-language studies—you can go to the outports and study them. I also think it’s kind of a culture of eulogy, which is changing. The first colony of the British Empire was a dominion. It’s the only place on earth that gave up its democratic [nationhood] by a vote ... and then became a province. Its litany of the past is part of the culture.

Exploring the idea of Newfoundland and Tasmania as ‘Galapagos’; tracing the stories of two islands—from what Mary Dalton (2012: n.p.) calls ‘a medieval world ... of animals ... a mixed economy’ of her childhood to today’s Newfoundland; following what Rees Campbell (2011: n.p.) calls ‘the scum of the earth ... either the thieves or people who earned money from locking us up’ as they make up today’s Tasmania; and exploring how the basic tenets of islandness— boundedness and connectedness, physically, emotionally/psychologically, and socially—all contribute to these dynamic cultures known for their endemic characteristics. This is the story of how two islands, mediated through the language of art, contribute to a healthier sense of self to the extent that island cultures, once deemed to be disadvantaged because of their peripheral status, are now being celebrated for the very fact that they are *not* mainstream. Through this story, we explore how the language of art can

result in dynamic societies that are writing their own stories, and their own futures, by celebrating the very thing that makes them distinctive: their islandness.

It comes back to an island, then: a piece of land surrounded by water. So, in the beginning, there was water.

Chapter 3 The role of the sea

If there is enough in the notion of islandness to justify a coherent intellectual preoccupation called ‘island studies’, it must have to do with the element of the *sea* ... It is the key factor in the construction of island identity (Hay, 2013: 211).

Islandness. Island-dwellers and island aficionados know in their bones the meaning of this word. Sometimes it is overt, and can be described in such terms as ‘insular’. But more often it is intangible, such as when you start to anticipate the journey home to an island, calculating hours (and sometimes days) in advance which ferry to catch. It is why islanders congregate in ‘islander clubs’ in landlocked Hamilton, Ontario, and Fort McMurray, Alberta. It is why Prince Edward Island poet Frank Ledwell (2002: 167) writes: ‘For most of us, being islanders is a terminal condition. But those who go away aren't cured. They simply die of the same ailment on alien soil’.

The Island Institute’s¹³ founder and president, Philip Conkling (2007: 191), defines islandness as ‘a metaphysical sensation that derives from the heightened experience that accompanies physical isolation’, an isolation reinforced by ‘boundaries of often frightening and occasionally impassable bodies of water’. This feeling is pre-rational, primordial, deep-in-the-marrow embodiment that incites rootedness, absoluteness, and a seemingly unparalleled yearning for home. Conkling adds, ‘Visitors can also experience the sensation as an instantaneous recognition’. That is precisely what happened to me—and countless other islanders-by-choice who come to an island for a week and stay for a lifetime. Thirty-one years ago I got off the ferry to Prince Edward Island and said, ‘This is home.’

In broad strokes, then, islandness encompasses:

¹³ Based in Rockland, Maine, the Island Institute was created in 1983 to sustain Maine’s island and remote coastal communities in such areas as economic development, education, community energy, marine resources, and media. In recent years, its reach has expanded ‘through partnerships with similar communities off the coast of the Carolinas, Alaska, Maryland and elsewhere along the American archipelago’ [emphasis in original] (Island Institute, n.d.).

how distinctive ‘island’ identities develop, how they are experienced and what effects they have on habits of thought and action, on socio-economic structures and political processes, and the way that these engage with the externally determined facts of geography and history (Warrington & Milne, 2007: 381–2).

In studying islands—whether through the lens of history, geography, politics, economics, ecology, literature, or art—we see manifestations of islandness. However, we cannot ignore the fact that islanders do not have a monopoly on islandness; that the state of being ‘islanded’ does not always require one to be surrounded by water. Rather, islandness can be a state of mind, or a ‘human condition of relative isolation and distinctiveness, expressed across almost the entire range of human experience’ (Warrington & Milne, 2007: 380). Indeed, islands and islandness are among the master metaphors of western civilisation (Connell, 2003; Hay, 2006; Baldacchino, 2012a). Gillis (2004: 1) writes: ‘Western culture not only thinks about islands, but thinks *with* them’—and that observation holds across multiple disciplines.

Many of the effects of islandness—such as insularity, isolation, shared identity—are similar to those found on or in such places as mountain heights or valleys, remote coastal communities, deserts, and urban ghettos (Tuan, 1974). What cannot surround these ‘metaphorical islands’ is water, and the geographical, psychological, and societal boundedness that comes from being encircled within. On an island, there is a literal/littoral boundary: ‘nature’s emphatic and unambiguous way of telling Islanders that they are a separate and unique people ... a geographic situation [that] dictate[s] both a sense of unity and separateness, of inclusion and exclusion’ (Baglole & Weale, 1973: 105–6). Unlike artificial boundaries, this water boundary requires a conscious and physical effort to cross. Thus water—and primarily saltwater oceans in the case of the islands studied herein—is what differentiates islands from mainlands, and real islands from metaphoric ones.

And water is the basis of islandness. There is an essentialisation that is created by the water since it creates a bounded space. It is an irrefutable part of who we are as islanders. In defining ‘essentialist’ I draw upon Seamon’s (1979) emphasis on ‘essential, universal qualities of human life’ or ‘foundational existential structure’,

and Cresswell's (2004) 'invariant and universal human condition to be revealed only when all "non-essentials", including all historical, environmental, and personal qualities, are stripped away, leaving behind some inescapable core of human experience'. Malpas (1999), as noted above, writes that we are created by the places in which we live: we can be displaced, but not unplaced. At the same time, islanders are affected by social, economic, political, and cultural influences. Akin to the 'nature vs nurture' argument, islanders are subject to the influence of both geography *and* culture even while no two islands are exactly the same as one another, and no two people interact with the same island in exactly the same way—and one might even interact with the same island differently at different points in one's life.

Reciprocity, too plays a role: there is a virtuous circle that runs between people and place, between the geographical influences and the social influences, that directly affects the ways in which islanders live their lives. One cannot ignore the effects of boundedness: it is part of the island effect, or being affected by living on an island. This effect becomes part of the essentialisation. So while I am not a racialist essentialist, as noted above, I *am* a place essentialist. We cannot help but be affected by where we live, nor can we help but have an impact on the places in which we live—and place is only one part of the entire lived experience, with personal and social influences playing an equal role in affecting life on an island.

This chapter, then, explores the role of the ocean in creating islandness, primarily physically, but to some extent psychologically and socially, too (I explore the latter in more detail in subsequent chapters). I argue that at the heart of island identity, and at the core of 'islandness', is the water-bound nature of islands—in tandem with 'the crossing' (discussed in Chapter 4). Throughout the present chapter, I examine how the ocean creates islandness through the lens of island art and artists, asking how the 'blessed state' of islandness manifests in the creative output of islanders. What do their artistic representations tell us about islandness? Finally, I draw upon metaphors of islandness to inform *real* islandness.

3.1 *An act of God ... or geography*

The word 'island' is a kind of pun: 'Isle' in its earliest forms derived from a word for water and meant, 'watery' or 'watered'. In Old English 'land' was

added to it to make a compound: ‘is-land’: water-surrounded land (Beer, 1990: 271).

Traditionally ‘island’ has been defined as ‘a piece of land surrounded by water’, or as a kind of ‘geographical precision’ (Baldacchino, 2005a: 35). But as Royle (2001: 8) writes, the definition has ‘limited utility in circumstances when some concept of scale or function is needed’. Size—usually on the bottom end of the hierarchy—is one issue. While Australia, at 7,600,000 km², is the world’s largest island, it is referred to as the smallest continent, leaving Greenland, at 2,130,800 km² the largest of the world’s islands. The smallest is impossible to determine. Even counting the world’s million or so islands is difficult, since, as Royle (2001: 8) wonders, do we include rocks that protrude from the sea?

Islands come in all shapes and sizes, and are variously known as aits, atolls, calves, cays, eyots, holms¹⁴, islets, keys, and skerries (Fischer, 2012: 10). In Gaelic an island is *ynys* or *inis*, and, in Japanese, it is *shima*. Iceland in Icelandic is eponymously ‘*Island*’ (pronounced ees-land). A grouping of islands is an archipelago—importantly meaning ‘chief sea’ (DeLoughrey, 2001; Stratford et al, 2011; Hayward, 2012). Islands can be continental or oceanic, and can be a broken-off bit of continent—‘a chip off the old block’ (McCusker & Soares, 2011: xi) so to speak—remnants of a volcano, a build-up of coral, fossils, or other organic matter (or, for that matter, inorganic, as technology allows), or an accumulation of sand that can actually cause an island, such as Sable Island in the North Atlantic, to appear to be slowly creeping across the ocean’s surface.

The other part of the definition of island that is problematic is how one determines if a piece of land is surrounded by water. According to the UK Hydrographic Office (in Royle, 2001: 8), ‘only if the land is completely surrounded by water at high tide does it become an island’. Similarly, in the United Nations Law of the Sea, Article 121—Regime of islands, defines an island as ‘a naturally formed area of land, surrounded

¹⁴ As in the island of Bornholm, Denmark, or the city of Stockholm, Sweden, which is situated on some fourteen islands. Or, as the author Bill Holm opens his marvelous book, *Eccentric Islands*: ‘Call me island. Or call me Holm. Same thing’ (2000: 3).

by water, which is above water at high tide’ (Islands Commission, 2009: 1). Islands are mostly separate from mainlands (which, in some cases, are other islands), accessible only by water or air transport (or by swimming). But some are tidal islands, cut off from their mainlands approximately twice daily. Some are ‘wannabe islands’, such as the province of Nova Scotia, attached to mainland Canada by only the twenty-four-kilometre-wide Isthmus of Chignecto; or North and South Bruny Island, joined together by a thin strip of sand and substrate appropriately called ‘the Neck’. Some are ‘almost islands’ or ‘used-to-be-islands’, connected by a *tombolo* (‘a bar of sand or shingle joining an island to the mainland’ [Fischer, 2012: 10]), a bridge (made of a diverse array of construction materials such as wood, rope, steel, or concrete), a causeway, or a tunnel. To the Vikings, an island was an island ‘if the passage between it and the mainland was navigable by a ship with its rudder in place’ (Royle, 2001: 9). According to that definition, Prince Edward Island, Isle of Skye, and Cape Breton Island, now bridged, are still islands.

Some islands, such as Twillingate (Newfoundland and Labrador) or Manhattan (New York), lose the word ‘island’ from their name after they have been connected to another landmass. In other instances, islands retain the word; Prince Edward Island or the Isle of Skye are two examples. In the case of Cape Breton Island, residents retain the word while the majority of mainland Canadians refer to it as Cape Breton. Knowing that the physical entity is an act of geography—the borders of which can only be altered by another physical act, and not by a political one—helps define an island. Prince Edward Island’s Harry Baglole and David Weale (1973, 106) call it a ‘singular geographic situation’. Or, as Weale observed many years later, quoting Auden: ‘an island is just a lake, inside out’, while Tasmanian expatriate Peter Conrad¹⁵ (2009: 14) calls a lake an ‘ocean bottled’.

¹⁵ As a twenty-year-old, in 1968 Conrad left Tasmania for England as soon as he possibly could, regarding the island as ‘an offshore island off the shore of an offshore continent, victims of a twofold alienation ... a place of ultimate banishment and estrangement ... in history as a last exit’ (2009: 3–4). Conrad felt he had been somehow given the ‘wrong’ life (7) and was terrified by ‘the rawness, the shivering vulnerability of the place’. He writes: ‘Mentally I left very early, though the body had to wait much longer before it could follow’ (10). In the intervening decades

For the most part, islands have been regarded as places of dwelling, where ‘the sea is the opposite of the land’ (Malpas, 2010: n.p.). In that opposition, islands have been portrayed as vulnerable to pressure from outside forces—ranging from colonisation to natural disasters and sea-level rise. In most instances, the ocean is seen as the delimiting factor, the cause of the vulnerability and a hindrance to land-based activities, particularly when transportation on and off the island are involved. In 1990 Gillian Beer (1990: 272) called for an ‘equal foregrounding of land and sea’ when she discussed the impact of British imperialism and considered how ‘the sea offers a vast extension of the island, allowing the psychic size of the body politic to expand, without bumping into others’ territory’.

Tongan scholar and writer Epele Hau‘ofa (1999: 31) continued the paradigm shift when he wrote about the Pacific Ocean traditionally serving as a road, binding Pacific peoples together instead of isolating them. In so doing, Hau‘ofa breathed new energy and hope into Polynesian and Micronesian academic pursuits, radically redefining how they are regarded by Europeans, as well as the islands’ own ‘indigenous elites’ (Edmond & Smith, 2003: 9). Hau‘ofa (1999: 31) writes:

There is a world of difference between viewing the Pacific as ‘islands in a far sea’ and as ‘a sea of islands’. The first emphasizes dry surfaces in a vast ocean far from the centres of power. Focusing in this way stresses the smallness and remoteness of the islands. The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships.

Hau‘ofa (37) ends his essay with the clarion cry:

We are the sea, we are the ocean. We must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have

between 1968 and 1988, when *Down Home* was published, Conrad had a change of heart, recognizing Tasmania as home, a ‘stage we can tread with confidence’ (231). Coming home to Tasmania reminded him ‘that we are all still pioneers, required to colonise the piece of ground which chance assigns us, to make it our own by shaping it into a small, autonomous, intelligible world’ (231).

resisted accepting as our sole appointed places and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again and take away our freedom.

The idea that the ocean and the land are a continuum recently re-entered the Island Studies discourse when Stratford et al. (2011) call for the expanding or reframing of Island Studies to include archipelagos, unsettling the ‘fundamental disjuncture in spatiality; the island split between two basic forces’ (115): land and water. The authors note that the word stems from the Greek ‘arch’, meaning ‘original, principal’, and ‘pelago’, meaning ‘deep, abyss, sea’ (120). Hayward (2012: 5) went on to coin the phrase ‘aquapelago’:

a compound of two terms that originally meant water/seas—ie *aqua* and *pelagos*—I have coined it as revision of the contemporary English term ‘archipelago’, which refers to an aggregation of islands. I utilise the ‘aqua’ component to refer to aquatic dimensions and ‘pelago’ as a residual (‘grounded’) element of the term I oppose it to (ie the archipelago).

Hayward (2012: 5) defines the word as an ‘assemblage of the marine and land spaces of a group of islands and their adjacent waters’, but then refines it to be more inclusive of the water’s ‘spatial depths’ and the human interaction with all it contains: a ‘social unit existing in a location in which the aquatic spaces between and around a group of islands are utilised and navigated in a manner that is fundamentally interconnected with and essential to the social group’s habitation of land and their senses of identity and belonging’.¹⁶

However, because islands appear and disappear with sea-level rise, or other natural processes such as volcanism, Australian Aboriginals have long regarded the ocean

¹⁶ The term might serve useful for further exploration of marine topics such as fishing zones (e.g., twelve- or two-hundred-mile limits), shipping routes (Halliday, 2013: n.p.), and resource extraction. However, Baldacchino (2012b: 23) sees no real need for a new term, since the word ‘archipelago’ already implies the sea.

and land as one, with invisible threads of connection: ‘There is no separation between land and sea. It’s all Country’ (Bradley, 2010: n.p.; Brinklow, 2010). Likewise, shore dwellers and fishers often do not distinguish between land and water, ‘actually mentally seeing shoals and eddies and sunken ships and rocks that are exposed only at low tide—not [as] barriers but features’ (Theroux, 2000, in Gillis, 2012: 105). ‘In the ancient world’, writes Gillis (2014: 156): ‘land and water were never as differentiated as they are today’; it was viewed, he notes, as ‘terraqueous’.

Peter Adams (2011: n.p.), a wood sculptor from Tasmania, sees land and sea as in relational, synchronous, and asynchronous cycle:

You can say that the one side [the land] is the more physical, the more permanent, and then the water side—tide’s in and out—it’s more malleable, more changeable. But being here, you can just go into yourself and you can start feeling the different clocks. There’s the geologic clock that is really slow, and then there’s the wind clock, which is a hell of a lot faster. You don’t seem to feel there’s such a big divide—you realise it’s all transition ... a constancy. The waves are always coming in. That doesn’t change.

In comparison with the land’s changing features, the ocean is the constant: the waves continue to roll to shore, year in, year out, no matter what.

3.2 *The ocean giveth ...*

The cure for anything is salt water—tears, sweat, or the sea
(Dinesen, [1934] 2002).

Over the millennia, people's attitudes toward the ocean have undergone sea changes. In *The Human Shore*, John Gillis (2012) traces human development—starting with the Biblical version of geography and history, followed by the scientific version confirmed by pre-historians. These labours show that humans did not come from landlocked Eden (the Middle East and India, normally thought to be the birthplace of civilisation ten thousand years ago [39]) but rather from the sea. Archaeologists found on the southernmost tip of South Africa evidence of habitation 164,000 years ago, where humans manifested 'amphibiousness, an ability to exploit both sides of the tide line, to live not just *by* the sea but *with* the sea in a sustainable relationship' (Gillis, 2012: 40). Earlier, in 1951, marine biologist Rachel Carson (1951: 14–5) had written: 'As life itself began in the sea, so each of us began his individual life in a miniature ocean within his [sic] mother's womb, and in the stages of his embryonic development repeats the steps by which his race evolved, from gill-breathing inhabitants of a water world to creatures able to live on land'. Gillis (2012) refers to Carson while tracing the development of coastal areas, from being the original home of *Homo sapiens* to being sites of sustenance and passageways to exploration, to being vilified as people learned to fear the sea's wrath, to being ignored, to becoming spas, pleasure and leisure playgrounds, to being sanitized and gentrified, to being sites of nostalgia, to becoming accessible only to the rich. 'Carson foresaw humanity making its way "back to the sea",' he writes (8), 'where, if it could not literally return to the ocean physically, it would "re-enter it mentally and imaginatively"'.

Entering the ocean physically and imaginatively is something island artists enact the world over. They come to know the characteristics and moods of the ocean, and just how they interact with the water depends on the latitude at which an island is located; for instance, cold-water islands in the northern or southern oceans are different from warm-water islands closer to the equator. The temperature of the North Atlantic, North Pacific, or Great Southern Oceans will kill you before predators found in warmer waters will. In a short story, 'The Madonna Feast', in her book, *Swimming*

Toward the Light, Newfoundland's Joan Clark (1990: 193) compares the 'soft underbelly' of the Pacific to the Atlantic, which 'does not have a soft underbelly at all' (Clark, 2012: n.p.). Clark cites her own hardy Celtic stock as an example of the toughness needed to survive on islands in the North Atlantic. In instancing such an example, Clark is invoking a performative geography of islandness: we produce 'the reality we purport to describe' (Fletcher, 2011; Stratford et al., 2011: 118); in this case, 'island hardiness'. Yet such naming and its mutually constitutive practice of being together can have a darker side; as Stratford (pers. comm., 2014) notes: 'the restless island native, the dark savage, the stoic and emotionally bounded lighthouse-keeper'. Through this reading, Clark's 'hardy stock', can also be used to describe ways that oppress and confine, 'with the islander relegated to a mendicant, backward, isolated status' (Stratford, pers. comm., 2014).

Depending on their location, oceans affect differentially the presence or absence of temperature fluctuations and types of severe weather events. The type of island—continental or oceanic—and its location in relation to other land masses, also affects human interaction with the ocean. Whether an island is protected by other islands in an archipelago—what Hodgson and Alexander (1972: 46) term 'an internal sea'¹⁷—or fully exposed to the ocean, makes a difference. So, too, does the side of the island one is on: strait-side or ocean-side. Sculptor Rachelle Chinnery (2013: n.p.) recognises that the waters surrounding her Hornby Island home in British Columbia's Gulf Islands are 'less dramatic, less challenging', than those found on Vancouver Island's west coast; to her, the water around Hornby Island is more like 'an internal saltwater sea'. Vancouver Island artist Joanna Streetly (2013: n.p.) calls the west coast a 'jumping-off point to the water', while writer Jack Hodgins (2013: n.p.) calls the leeward coast the 'doorstep to the continent'. Writer Susan Musgrave (2013: n.p.) lives on the much more remote Haida Gwaii (720 kilometres north of Vancouver and between 48 and 140 kilometres from mainland British Columbia). She prefers west coasts to east coasts—of Canada and of Ireland. For this preference

¹⁷ While Hay (2013: 215) tends to use 'ocean' and 'sea' interchangeably, occasionally he differentiates between the two, with ocean 'connoting the vastness of geographical differences' and sea signifying 'a slightly more circumscribed body of open water'—the latter which describes an 'internal sea'.

she cites ‘the wind. The weather. Being on the edge. Being at the edge. Being able to see the horizon and know that there’s nothing there for a long long time’.

However and wherever islands are situated, there are some constants when the ocean is taken into account. The water tastes salty, and the air around the island often has a salt tang to it. Tides go in and out diurnally, taking approximately twelve hours and twenty-five minutes per cycle. In the poem, ‘First Philosophies’, Newfoundland poet Don McKay (2006: 26) calls it ‘the insufferable ocean’ and, in his ‘Astonished’ (2006: 3), ‘the nameless all-dissolving ocean’ (2006: 3)—words taken ‘from the point of view of the rock, the softness of the ocean wearing down the rock’ (McKay, 2012: n.p.).

Water currents affect air currents; in turn, air currents reacting with water and land help define the weather. It can be windy or foggy, frigid or balmy, but being in close proximity to the ocean usually means there is plenty of oxygen and moisture. The ocean has a moderating influence on island climates, ‘warming it in winter and cooling it in summer’, writes Louise Young (2000: 2–3):

Ocean water has several properties that are advantageous for islands. It changes the temperature very slowly, and more heat is needed to raise the temperature of a given quantity of water than is necessary for any other known liquid. Similarly as heat is dissipated, the temperature of water drops very slowly. This gradual warming and cooling characteristic produces a remarkably stable environment, and it is responsible for an interesting phenomenon that occurs every 24 hours in the atmosphere above an island. As the sun shines on the land and on the sea, it warms the surface of the island more rapidly than the water around it. This causes air to rise above the island, and when this air mass reaches the colder upper atmosphere, the moisture in it condenses into clouds. Thus, most islands in the afternoon are marked by the presence of a cloud lying just downwind of the land. This phenomenon has been observed by navigators for centuries. The Polynesian adventurers used it as a tool to find their way from island to island over the vast stretches of the Pacific Ocean. The existence of the islands of New Zealand was guessed at many years before they were discovered and were known as the land of the ‘long white cloud’.

How strongly the water holds, cradles, you, depends on the salt content. How effectively the water cleanses, and heals, depends on how deeply one absorbs it. For Bruny Island's John Cameron (2011: n.p.), the water 'enlivens' all his senses: sounds bringing 'resonance', sights bringing 'visual delight':

The play of the light on the water suggests to me something around the way in which substances change their form as well as their appearance. Sometimes you look at the water and it's like it's molten lead. Other times it's like polished tin, pewter. It becomes a different stuff. There's something in the play of light and the water that suggests to me a changing of form, changeability ... something of a metaphor that runs more deeply. I find the water here is almost like a culmination of my lifelong abiding appreciation of water.

The ocean has been regarded as a giver, providing food like 'a mother's womb' as described in Donna Morrissey's (2005: 4) novel *Sylvanus Now*. There, Morrissey attributes human qualities to the ocean:

[A]n inlet like this one is the lungs of the ocean, inhaling the rising tide through its mouth, swishing it along the lushness of the shoreline, then filtering it through sawing eelgrass before exhaling it back out with the ebbing tide, enriched, cleansed (112).

In another passage, Morrissey labels the ocean female. The protagonist, a fisherman named Sylvanus, calls it 'the mother':

Loath to disturb the mother's quiet on this morning, he left his motor alone and paddled instead from shore, his boat slipping quietly across the arm. Closer to the neck, the mother stirred beneath him, her swells rubbing lazily against the loins of that narrow opening (320).

In a short story entitled 'The Lost Salt Gift of Blood' (2000: 19), Cape Breton writer Alistair MacLeod describes the ocean as male, sexualizing it in a fashion similar to Morrissey:

The harbour itself is very small and softly curving, seeming like a tiny, peaceful womb nurturing the life that now lies within it but which originated

from without; came from without and through the narrow, rock-tight channel that admits the entering and withdrawing sea. That sea is entering again now, forcing itself gently but inevitably through the tightness of the opening and laving the rocky walls and rising and rolling into the harbour's inner cove.

And Newfoundland's Don McKay (2012: n.p.) notes that, while it might be 'traditional' to call the ocean a 'she', as in 'Mary, Mother', he says, 'I'm not sure if I actually think about it that way ... I actually don't think that it's gendered'.

3.3 ... and the ocean taketh away

*from 'Bending Light'
(for Hillary Younger)*

*You know about rogue waves,
the ones that kill the fishermen.
But the shot's the thing
And getting up close and personal with the sea
is key.*

*But this wave
doesn't splash your feet.
It breaks over you and tries to sweep you out.
You hang on to your camera and the tripod and the edge of the ledge
I'm inside the wave it's on top of me I can't breathe water everywhere
and then it's gone*

*The stolen hotel shower cap
still covers your lens.
And as you drink your lungs full
you think,*

I wonder if it still works.

Gendered or no, the ocean is always unpredictable: squalls come up in an instant; rogue waves can sweep away the unwary. In Hawai'i, tourism literature warns people to never turn their back on the sea. And even though there are no 'signposts

on the surface of the sea’ (MacLeod, 2000: 23) to help guide your way,¹⁸ there is an ‘ocean literacy’ (Cobb, 2012: n.p.), a knowledge of the ocean—its currents, its shoals, its habits—that can save your life if you know its rules.

Consider the skin of the water when it is calm; the mountain peaks of white caps when it is not. Experienced ocean swimmers know the danger of a riptide, know how to relax and go with its pull, swim parallel to the shore, until it finally lets go and the swimmer can make his or her way back in. The inexperienced fight for control, panic, and often drown. Tasmania’s Rees Campbell (2011: n.p.) has an abiding respect for the ocean: ‘It’s a foreign world that is a very harsh and judgmental master. You can never here take the sea for granted, even twenty metres out. I have a healthy fear of it, but I’m not scared of it’. John Cameron (2011: n.p.) has been caught in the occasional riptide: ‘I’ve had it drummed into me enough that you don’t fight that, you go along shore. There is that initial panicky feeling of being in the hands of a force that’s much larger than you’.

Fogo Island’s Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) is always aware of the ocean:

It’s there with you all the time. It’s constantly doing something that makes you worry: what’s it going to do next? It’s a constant menace, until you make peace with it. That menacing, it never went away, always felt like it would eat you alive. It’s about loss, too. So many people lost so many people—including me—to the ocean.

Just as the ocean gives, then, it takes: ‘Rush[ing] in faster than anything had ever rushed anywhere’, as Lisa Moore (2009: 185) writes in the award-winning novel *February*, a novel about the *Ocean Ranger* disaster of 14th February 1982, when an oil-drilling platform went down in a storm off Newfoundland. Moore writes that ‘the fist of ocean had punched through’ (294) the window, short-circuiting the electrical

¹⁸ The quote from MacLeod continues: ‘You cannot tell where you have been five minutes before and in the squalls of snow you cannot see’ (23). But MacLeod goes on to describe how, for those who fish the sea, the grounds are clearly marked, if only in the minds of those who fish them (24), providing a further example of ocean literacy.

panel and causing the oil rig to list and capsize, killing eighty-four workers. Such maritime disasters are part of the culture of small islands and thus are fodder for artists and storytellers. In putting voice to the stories through these kinds of creative expression, the artists contribute to strengthening island identity. Says Newfoundland writer Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.): ‘The danger of that road out there —the literature, the culture of this place—is laced with it’. For instance, *February* centres on Helen, whose husband is one of those lost. In our interview, Moore (2012: n.p.) notes:

I wanted to try and imagine what it would be like to go down on that rig, and it seemed to kind of help, the idea of a void, it was a void. And hundred-foot waves as they said in *Rig*, the play. It’s the reality of living in Newfoundland. I’m frightened of the ocean. It’s a mystery. And a mystery is a gift, really, for a writer. How it works—the power of it—I guess you can’t look at it without thinking about power, and also the fragility of life. Just the unimaginability—if that’s a word—of dying out there with nothing.

In *February*, Moore (2009: 56) writes:

they said there must be some island out there and that’s where the survivors were ... There was no island. Everybody knew there was no island. It was impossible. People who knew the coast like the back of their hand, but they thought there must be an island that they hadn’t noticed before.

The idea that people thought there might be an island on which survivors could have cast up demonstrates how pervasive the island castaway narrative is: even though ‘everybody knew there was no island’, they still hoped.

The disaster about which Moore writes was also the topic of journalist Mike Heffernan’s oral history, *Rig* (2009), which went on to be adapted for the stage, premiering on the thirtieth anniversary of the sinking. It was also memorialized in singer-songwriter Ron Hynes’ song ‘Atlantic Blue’, described by Stuart Pierson as ‘a masterpiece of understatement’ (1996: 61):

What colour is a heartache, from a love lost at sea?

What shade of memory never fades, but lingers to eternity?

How dark is the light of day, that sleepless eyes of mine survey?

Is that you, Atlantic Blue? My heart is as cold as you.

...

Who's the voice so familiar, whispers my name as the night comes in?

And whose wish never fails to find my vacant heart on Valentine's?

Is that you Atlantic Blue?

My heart is as cold, my heart is as cold,

My heart is as cold as you (West, 2005: n.p.).

Even though the words '*Ocean Ranger*' are never mentioned, Pierson (1996: 60) writes that the song can be interpreted as a 'challenge to, or outcry against oil companies, government, and anybody and everybody "in charge" who should properly have seen the folly of winter drilling in winds and waters as fiercely hostile as exist on earth'. Or it can be seen as 'religious rather than political, and that means the particularity of time and place, that is, the historicity of the song's content, drops away or transforms into an eternal type'. Hynes himself (who declined my request to interview him in August 2013) has said that, compared with other songs on the album *Cryer's paradise*, 'Atlantic Blue' is 'the real thing' (Pierson, 1996: 53); Pierson calls it poetry that 'transcends its genre' (53). Hynes has been called 'The Man of a Thousand Songs' (Narváez, 2005: n.p.), and 'the soul-speaker of Newfoundland' (Winter, 2005: n.p.).

Says Dragland (2012: n.p.), the *Ocean Ranger* disaster 'was one of those technological failures from over-reaching. It's just gone to the heart of us'. More recently, in March 2009, the Cougar Helicopter Sikorsky S-92 crash that killed seventeen workers as they were being ferried to an oil rig has been added to the already lengthy list of human life lost to the ocean. Says Dragland:

I was in Corner Brook at the March Hare¹⁹ when that helicopter story came out. It just zipped around Corner Brook. It wasn't happening there, but everybody knew about it. It just felt like the *Ocean Ranger* all over again. There weren't so many people killed, but—it's almost a communal mind, almost, and that's a function of the smallness of the place, maybe the boundedness. It's tribal. It's there with people, highly educated people, they have this connection that you and I can't have, it's not in the bones, not in the blood.

Although the ocean figures prominently in author Wayne Johnston's novels, he has never felt comfortable on or around the ocean. Islandness is accentuated in his novel, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (2000), in phrases such as 'nothing so enisles you like the sea' (398) and 'the circumscribed geography of home' (142). He (2012: n.p.) says he was always aware of the ocean growing up, and the powerful hold it had over the living. But, he notes, 'when I grew up, and when my dad grew up on the ocean in Ferryland, most of the stories were about people being lost, people drowning, ships being lost at sea. I always felt excluded by the ocean. I always felt way more comfortable on land. I like to write about it but I don't like to be in it'.

The ocean and the shore around Tasmania figure prominently in Hillary Younger's images. Younger (2011: n.p.) has learned to read the sea, to know the waves and the tides, and when it is safe to photograph and when it is not. But she also knows first-hand the ocean's unpredictability; one photographing adventure nearly turned into disaster when a rogue wave swept over her.

The ocean in another manifestation—ice—intrigues visual artist M'Liz Keefe (2014: n.p.), who is originally from New York City. She fell in love with Fogo Island in 2013, and decided to spend the winter of 2013–14 there. Her first encounter with a 'sea of ice' provided a different and new perspective:

¹⁹ Newfoundland's March Hare poetry festival is a 'trans-island celebration of words and music, involving seven events in three towns over five days', held each year in March (themarchhare.ca); in recent years the festival has extended to Toronto and Ireland.

Confounding. Barren. Freezing cold. So white it blinds you. It is empty, bleak, a feeling of a million miles of nothing. An underside of beauty; and whatever life is here it hides. It is still frighteningly far away. Quiet. This is so big. I am so small.

Hailing from the community of Tilting, on Fogo Island, photographer Paddy Barry (2013: n.p.) talks about the sound: ‘Oh, it is a very special experience when the ice comes. The sound of the ocean, usually so loud around Tilting, becomes blanketed and very quiet ... hardly a sound, except for the birds’.

Ice—‘moving ice’—says Fogo Island’s Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.), is ‘the most important thing that defines Fogo Island. Yeah, we get nice summer days, but that’s not what formed us. What forms us is that every year half of Greenland breaks off and comes down on top of us. And this feeling, you know, it’s coming’. The ice, like water, serves as both barrier and road: fishing is impossible during the winter months, yet, says Cobb: ‘I went to school on the other side of Joe Batt’s Arm. We walked across the harbour... We used to go to Change Islands on the ice. You can go all the way to Gander Bay on the ice’.

Fogo Island is bound by ice several months of the year. M’Liz Keefe (2014: n.p.) describes a wintry ride on the ferry:

Where the body of the vessel meets the solid ice a frigid smoky green water pushes and bubbles to the surface. The ice breaks away from itself. Massive dinosaur-size palettes push out to the solid ice. It’s violent. The boat leaves a path of water in its wake. But not for long. The ice opens only for moments allowing the ferry to pass through. The ocean ice self-mends. The palettes of ice run back to each other. There is evidence this Arctic white surface has been disturbed. As the sun begins to set the shadows make marks like pencil on paper. A long winding path behind us. An indication of passage.

Much more pragmatically, Cobb (2012: n.p.) says: ‘You always knew that help was *not* on the way. So we never had this concept that things just keep coming—stuff didn’t come. But come Christmas you were going to be froze in for the winter’.

One of more prominent complaints against the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the body that operates the provincial ferry service, is that the ferry that connects Fogo Islanders to the mainland does not have ice-breaking capabilities. In March 2013 the ferry broke down in the ice and the islands were cut off for several days. Helicopters provided emergency transportation, but when they were grounded by fog, transportation from the mainland became impossible. Paddy Barry (2013: n.p.) calls it ‘the long and hungry month of March’ (an expression based in Newfoundland’s early days, when food supplies were dwindling) (Archival Moments, 2012: n.p.). Plans for a new ferry are now in the works; it is due to begin service in 2015.

Being surrounded by ice brings potential for catastrophe. ‘Copying the ice pans’—jumping from pan to pan along the shore—writes Michael Crummey (in Crummey & Locke, 2004: 27), ‘is a time-honoured tradition among children in outport Newfoundland’. Just as time-honoured is ‘the warning parents issue to their children every year to *stay the hell in off the slobby ice*’ (Crummey & Locke, 2004: 27). As recently as 2000, three teenagers from Pouch Cove died while copying the pans.

One of Newfoundland’s defining historical moments was the sealing disaster of 1914: ‘one of the most harrowing and wanton tragedies to befall Newfoundland: the death by exposure of 78 sealers from the S.S. *Newfoundland* who were left on the ice off the northeast coast for 53 hours in a savage blizzard in March 1914’ (Memorial University Archives). *Death on the Ice* (Brown & Horwood, 1972) was the first book to deal with the disaster. Author Cassie Brown, a short-story writer and Women’s Editor of the St John’s newspaper *The Daily News*, did extensive research into the disaster and the ‘magisterial enquiry established in April 1914 to investigate the disaster’ (Memorial University Archives: n.p.). The disaster is another in the litany of Newfoundland’s disasters. How the stories inspire artists is explored further in Chapter 6.

3.4 *‘That corrugated look to water’*

That corrugated look to water
—grey with a glitter:
I’ve been told now that it’s ice;
microscopic bergs clashing,
making music of many thin tones
too faint for us to hear (Acorn, 2002: 100).

Because Earth is 75 per cent water, our bodies 85 per cent water, and the brain 90 per cent water, water has been called ‘the conductive force of life’. We respond to water in subconscious and powerfully meaningful ways. Writes Louise Young (2000: 3):

There is within each of us an instinctive knowledge of the primal significance of water. Many people hold water sacred. They are baptized in it; they pour it over their heads at sunrise; they touch it to their foreheads in prayer.

Tasmanian poet Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.), too, recognises the powerful effect of water on her own work:

One of those things I started to become very aware of and tried to explore in my poetry is the sense that our bodies mirror geography, and that we are so much water, and maybe at some very elemental level my love of the sea and water leads back to that as well, and that we are creatures of water.

Just as tides are governed by the phases of the moon, so, too, are we: from erratic behaviour at the full moon to monthly menstrual cycles, the ocean’s effects are felt on the living. The ocean also nourishes us physically. Says John Cameron (2011: n.p.):

I feel the beneficial effect of saltwater on my skin, and think of the salt working its way into my body to meet the iron that I have taken in from the soil via the vegetables in our garden. Likewise, iron and salt combine in the seaweed we use to mulch garden beds.

Since humans evolved from water, those ties are strong, pre-rational; ‘what today is blood in our veins’, writes Godfrey Baldacchino (2012b: 25), ‘would have been seawater eons ago’. Says Prince Edward Island writer and storyteller David Weale

(2012: n.p.), ‘there’s something very ancestral about being near the shore. I still think we know that deep, deep down that that’s home’. He talks about the water’s ‘rinsing quality’:

Many people have told me, and it’s my experience as well, that if you spend a couple hours walking on the shore—not lying under an umbrella reading a book—and allowing the sound of the ocean, the smell of the ocean, the sight of the ocean, and the sand, you enter a kind of wonderful mindlessness that is liberating. What it liberates you from are all the cares and worries and anxieties and compulsions and all those things that bedevil us, necessarily—to live in this world you gotta be concerned about certain things from time to time. But when those things completely take over your life, it’s almost like it’s a frantic thing. How the hell do I get out of the space that I’m in? Where do I go? People will pay anything, they’ll do anything, because they don’t want to be trapped in this swirl of negative anxiety. For me there’s nothing so powerful as spending time at the shore. I can go there in a knot, and when I leave that knot has disappeared or at least has greatly loosened, just from being there.

The deep compulsion to be near the ocean is exhibited by artists in both Newfoundland and Tasmania. Writer Joan Clark (2012: n.p.) was born near the Atlantic coast in Liverpool, Nova Scotia. For her, the title of Alistair MacLeod’s short story ‘The Lost Salt Gift of Blood’ (2000), encapsulates a genetic instinct for salt water, not fresh. ‘It’s what it is. You have to express it metaphorically because it’s so powerful’. And writer Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) is most content when she is on her home island of Tasmania:

I do know that if you put me away from the ocean, I would be utterly miserable. As I’ve said about that topography of mountain and sea together, I feel right when that combination of things is there, and I feel wrong when it is not. It’s very subtle. I find myself feeling unbalanced. I suspect the presence of the ocean somewhere on my peripheral vision is so normal I don’t even see it. [It] is profoundly there.

Newfoundland writer Bernice Morgan (2012: n.p.), too, experienced a physical body sensation while driving across Canada, far from the ocean:

When we were coming to the middle, the Prairies, I started to feel physically ill, and I thought it was something to do with the car. A few days later, as we got closer to the coast, I started to feel better. And looking back on it I had no orientation—I didn't know where the sea was; there was no sense of the sea.

Tasmanian musician and composer Carey Lewincamp (2011: n.p.) feels it is a challenge to articulate verbally his reaction to the sea; he knows only that he reacts similarly every time he sees the ocean:

One of our favourite things in Tassie, when we're driving, is that moment when you come over the hill and you see the water. I know all the spots on the highways where you're driving through the country, the bush, and you come over the hill and whoa, and there's the sea. That is pretty well part of our conversation every single trip. For us, it's not words, it's just the feeling, a recognition. Like my music, I react in a non-verbal way. I get this feeling and I don't really identify with it in words.

Knowing each and every vantage point where Lewincamp will catch sight of the ocean demonstrates a deep knowledge of and attachment to place. For him, this emotional reaction to the ocean feeds into a profound sense of home that is reflected in his song 'Saffire', which was 'commissioned for Saffire, Pure Tasmania's premier property at beautiful Freycinet on Tasmania's East Coast. Freycinet', writes Lewincamp (2011b: n.p.), 'is one of our special places where Sona and I planned our first home and future life together'. This sensibility is also apparent in such songs as 'Nuyina', the Tasmanian Aboriginal word for 'spirit'; and 'The Way Home for Ivor Longing', about which Lewincamp writes, 'A Dad joke! But who is Ivor Longing? He's the part of all of us who have been away from home and experienced the yearning of wanting to be back there'.

3.5 'Retentir'

from 'Lisa's sense of water'
(for Lisa Moore)

Summers around the bay
there's a different sense of time, of beauty

and enough quiet to sort of settle
dig deep

The rhythm of the North Atlantic pounds her senses
how it works frightens her
the power of it, the fragility of it, the mystery of it
...
swimming in the North Atlantic
she recognises the pull

On shores the world over we can experience the waves' gentle nudge or hammering force, and know that someone on the other side of the ocean is experiencing the same thing. We are separate yet connected by waves.

The following evocative description of waves graces one wall of the Art Gallery in The Rooms in St John's:

Our planet is circled by ocean waves. Humans wave their arms to attract attention. Soundwaves carry vibrations to our ears. Lightwaves reflect the colours we see. Art can create waves of thought and emotion that impact our senses in many ways. Consider all the energies that make up your experience. How do these waves affect you?

Waves bumping against the shore are akin to Minkowski's essence of life, 'a feeling of being, of existence ... of participation in a flowing onward, necessarily expressed in terms of time, and secondarily expressed in terms of space' (in Bachelard, [1958] 1994: xvi). Minkowski calls this 'auditive' metaphor '*retentir*', or reverberation, as though 'a well-spring existed in a sealed vase and its waves, repeatedly echoing against the sides of this vase, filled it with their sonority':

I believe that this is precisely where we should see the world come alive and, independent of any instrument, of any physical properties, fill up with penetrating deep waves which, although not sonorous in the sensory meaning of the word, are not, for this reason, less harmonious, resonant, melodic and capable of determining the whole tonality of life. And this life itself will reverberate to the most profound depths of its being, through contact with these waves, which are at once sonorous and silent ... No, it is the dynamism of the sonorous life itself which by engulfing and appropriating everything it finds in

its path, fills the splice of space, or better, the slice of the world that it assigns itself by its movement, making it reverberate, breathing into it its own life ... In fact, our examples, the sealed vase, the forest, because of the very fact that they fill up with sounds, form a sort of self-enclosed whole, a microcosm (xvi-xvii).

This description of ‘deep penetrating waves’ that ‘reverberate to the most profound depths of its being’ enact the physical properties of waves that engulf an island. The island is like a vase, with waves bumping up against its shore, breathing, sonorous, echoing, vibrating. As Louise Young (2000: 3) remarks: ‘On the smaller islands there is no place where the presence of water cannot be seen or felt or heard. The regular pounding of waves on the shore is deeply reassuring, like the beating heart an infant feels in his mother’s arms, or in the amniotic sea that is the womb. It is no wonder, then, that so many feel comforted within ‘the wave-lined edge of home’ (Acorn, 2002: 53).

How strongly this life force constantly bumping against the shoreline affects the island depends on the size of the island: the smaller the island, the more aware you are of the constant crashing or murmuring, salt spray or sea tang, or the negative ions expended. On larger islands you may never experience the ocean’s energy, and not be conscious of the fact that you are even on an island—until you have to leave.

Like John R. Stilgoe writes in the Foreword to the 1994 edition of Bachelard ([1958] 1994: ix), Fogo Island photographer Paddy Barry (2013: n.p.) calls the constant motion ‘the rote of the sea’. For some, waves are very soothing, meditative. For others—like me when I first arrived on Prince Edward Island thirty-one years ago—the sound is like a dripping tap: irritating. My brain would anticipate the next whoosh on shore, and the next, and the next—decidedly not soothing—and I could not fall asleep. But eventually I got used to sleeping ‘with the roar of the ocean in my ears’.

And islands *are* different from mainland coasts, says writer and biologist Harry Thurston (2012: n.p.), who grew up in Yarmouth, on the south shore of Nova Scotia, looking out to Cape Sable Island where his mother grew up. When asked just how they are different, he says, islands are ‘a big obstruction sitting in a natural current flow’. He describes the physics of ocean currents:

If you drop a stone in a smooth-running current, you suddenly create turbulence that causes upwellings, with colder water coming up from deeper layers in the ocean or from the ocean bottom. It brings two things: nutrients from the sea floor and more oxygen, because oxygen stays in solution in colder waters. When it comes to the surface you get the third element you need for biological productivity: sunlight. So when all three things are brought together: nutrients, oxygen and sunlight, you get much more productivity around islands. It's just a by-product, in a sense, of physics—it's a mechanical thing that is happening. As well, you've got waves coming ashore, but it's more the fact that, in the case of the mainland, you've got all of this energy being spent against the coastline—and energy being created all around it. That's a more dynamic phenomenon.

When asked how a given stretch of coastline on an island compared to a similar stretch on a mainland in generating the same kinds of life, and the same kind of energy, Thurston explains:

I think it varies. What we know is that inshore waters, coastal waters, are more productive than deep offshore waters. But when you look at the Atlantic coast, and you look at the length of the coastline, you discover that the length of the mainland coast is less than the total of the island coastlines. So if you take the 4,000 islands that are off the coast of Nova Scotia, and the circumference of those, it's greater than the length of the mainland coastlines. So you have the potential for more energy, and more productivity. And that's in fact what you get.

There are scientific reasons, then, for those who find being near the shore on a small island energizing, invigorating. But there are just as many reasons for finding the ocean soothing, meditative. Living on a float home in Tofino Harbour, off Vancouver Island's remote west coast, Joanna Streetly (2013) finds the ocean to be a kind of subconscious hypnosis: 'It's therapeutic, magnetic, it draws your eye, the mind moves and wanders with the rhythm of the water. It is as if someone is stroking your brain, forming ideas'. She composes haiku while walking the beach or kayaking. 'There's that rhythm, that predictable rhythm of walking or paddling on

the water. Your mind is free to wander, to find that zoned-out place where ideas happen. Your mind is taken up by the water, and your body is moving, and that's where the ideas come from'.

Sculptor Rachelle Chinnery (2013) finds the constant movement of the ocean comforting. While kayaking she noticed through the clear water the wave forms etched in the sand; now she carves these 'iterative lines, lines of pushing water onto sand, the lines that represent a flow in nature', into porcelain. Since they are not cast, no two are the same, she says. The pattern made her think:

It's always there, a meditation in life. It leads me to reflect on patterning in science and philosophy ... leads to thinking about larger applications of the repetition in life. You can see how the sand responds to the water and how that is echoed in how we respond to the forces around us. The whole idea of the ebb and flow of creativity. The repeating nature of everything we do.

Chinnery says she never wanted to be a production potter, one of those people who makes the same thing over and over again, plate after plate. But here she is, she laughs, making the same shapes and patterns over and over again.

Sculptor Peter Adams (2011: n.p.) labels the ocean changeable: one day 'almost docile, you can melt into it', and the next 'really wild', giving you 'a real charge to know that you really are on the edge'. Looking out to Antarctica:

It's about the easiest way for a person to get seasick to experience the wildness of the water. You can just stand there and just feel this huge energy crashing on the cliffs. Then that open expanse. Negative ions in the air help your endorphins, help your hormones become more positive. I think there's something biologic happening there. Then there's the emotional. You can't help but feel happy when it's really wild. It's like you're a kid at the fairgrounds, on a rollercoaster. You're just bubbly with excitement, that's a real push to elevate one's mood.

For 1,212 consecutive days, 'three years, three months, three weeks, three days', ending 29th January 2006, he set himself a challenge: to go in the water every day.

I didn't miss one day. Well, I did miss one day, with a nine-metre swell. The previous winter I went into the water during a nine-metre swell and I almost drowned. This time I just got dressed in my wet suit, went down with the board, and just stood on the edge and allowed the water to come up to my knees, did a kind of a ritualistic thing, and just honoured the force of the wave. I didn't feel I had to totally immerse myself. So it was a lesson. There's a certain ridiculousness to that commitment.

For Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.), the waves crashing upon Newfoundland's shores are a metaphor for culture: new music and new ideas washing up on beaches (a topic further explored in Chapter 5). Similarly, John Cameron (2011: n.p.) of Bruny Island uses the image of water rippling outward while reflecting on his island experiences in relation to the outside world, and vice-versa. In the following passage, he refers to this phenomenon, which he explores in his online essays, 'Letters from Far South':

This sort of essentialising and focusing has definitely occurred here, and a sense of wholeness of my entire life that I've not experienced before. At the same time, I'm aware of a rippling out. We've talked about all these nested place experiences. But I'm writing something that through a series of historical accidents is getting published in this obscure American journal.²⁰ The first of the readers are primarily the people in the US and Canada who are subscribers to that journal. I'm very interested in the transition towns movement, which started in England and is now global. Some of the work I'm doing with Bruny Island Environment Network involves that. So the ripples don't just go out from Blackstone to Killora, coast care to BIEN, to some of the stuff we've had with Canadian transition, it goes out to the US and UK. It is a focusing and essentialising, but it's not a one-way movement. A bit like, you know, you throw a stone in the pond and the ripples bounce back off the shore. So things go out as well as in.

²⁰ *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter*, published online by writer and phenomenologist David Seamon at University of Kentucky (see, for example, Cameron, 2008: n.p.).

At the same time that waves lap onshore, islanders send their culture out into the world—like a concentric circle with the island in the middle, waves rippling out to the edge, the horizon. Like a dimpling raindrop on the surface of the water, the movement of energy extends outward until it dissipates, or bumps up against the tide coming in.

Through the cyclical movement of the ocean and its tides, islanders have come to define their own sense of time. Fogo Island painter Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.) calls the water his ‘clock’; when he was growing up, how days, weeks, and months were measured depended on the rhythms of the ocean:

*from ‘Old Sharemen’
(for Winston Osmond)*

...

*Here at the end of Herring Cove Road, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island
the tide is your calendar, marks your days, weeks and months*

The seagulls told us when winter was over
the 29th of March, the gulls would come back
the 28th of June, the terns

And with the terns there was salmon, the capelin, and then there was the cod
Because the cod followed the capelin, the bait, right? Clockwork.

Osmond explains that after the seagulls came back,

You’d just want to pack up everything in the cabin that you were bringing home, and deal with it that weekend, because there was going to be a big mild-up just after that. There was going to be water on the ponds. Winter was over. The seagulls told us that. So it was all clockwork. That was relied on one time by the older generations. But now it’s unreliable, because there’s global warming and all that stuff.



Figure 3.1 – *Old Sharemen*, 2011, by Winston Osmond
(used with permission of the artist; herringcoveart.com)

The idea of time being cyclical, dependent on the seasons and the elements, is echoed in this quote from writer Robert Finch (in Gillis 2012, 98): time is ‘not linear but diastolic, pulled by centripetal and centrifugal currents. Like the year, all things go out from and return to this one place’. For Osmond, this one place where things go and come back, year after year, is his home in Shoal Bay, Fogo Island. The notion of island time as it relates to the perception of islands and islanders is further explored in Chapter 5.

3.6 The elements: weather, light, wind

*from 'Wayne Johnston talks about the weather'
(for Wayne Johnston)*

*On CTV there was a weatherman named Bob Lewis.
And he'd do the weather.
And he would always get it wrong.
But it wasn't his fault.
It was nobody's fault.
Weather's hard to predict, you know?*

*In the world around us
there are three or four people
whose professions are to tell the future.
Aside from fortune-tellers
there are people who can predict the stock market
and people who can predict the weather.*

*So when you look at the weather map on TV
and see a low in, say, New York or Boston,
that's tomorrow in Newfoundland.*

*We're getting everybody else's used weather.
It's being handed down to us.*

As Rex Murphy says, 'In Newfoundland we don't get weather systems, we get random torment' (Cobb, 2012: n.p.).

In addition to the tides, the ocean and ocean currents bring weather in all its manifestations: extreme heat, fire storms, wind, salt spray, fog, ice fog, ice smoke, hurricanes, typhoons, storm surges, rain, freezing rain, snow, sleet, blizzards, ice storms. Weather is a powerfully uniting force for most people who experience extreme weather events, but islanders – by dint of being close the ocean – are particularly vulnerable. It is part of the island condition on Prince Edward and Cape Breton Islands, Newfoundland and Fogo Island, that 'snow days' are inevitable: school and work close, snowplows are called off the roads, the electricity goes off, and life comes to a standstill. At times such as these, people come together to share resources—food, drink, stories, music—and, for some, these are the bright lights that shake up what are usually long and tedious winters. Then there are those extreme weather events that disrupt normal life, where mere survival becomes the objective.

Yet islanders take a strange pride in their lot when it comes to weather, having survived adversity yet again. Weather is part of what makes islanders different from mainlanders, with the result that it binds islanders together; it is part of island identity. Unlike locales where the weather is the same day after day, the weather on many islands is a persistent topic of conversation, as a greeting ('Large day, eh?' or 'It's a corker!'), as small talk or a way to fill in silences ('How much snow did you get over where you are?'), as an ice-breaker ('Are you having a good summer?'), or as a way to vent ('Will this winter never end?'). And islanders have learned to never depend on the weather forecast, as the slogan on a T-shirt from Iceland suggests: 'If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes'.

This pride manifests itself artistically as well as in everyday life. For instance, in his poem, 'Mr. Iceberg', Newfoundland author Stan Dragland (2005: 31) writes: 'Another blizzard. There has already been over 500 cm of snow. We have a shot at last year's record'. There is a certain rogue 'just how far can one push it before ...' mentality that prevails on islands—perhaps to show that they are just a little bit tougher than mainlanders, just a little more special than mainlanders, perhaps in reaction to mainlanders' attitudes toward islanders. They often perceive mainlanders as being a little soft: Prince Edward Islanders were never more scathing than in 1999 during 'that time Toronto called the military to battle snow' (Coumts, 2013: n.p.). They scoffed when the mayor of Toronto, in a story that is now legendary, chose to call in the army in 1999 to dig out a city crippled under 118 cm of snow that fell over a ten-day period (Tambar, 2009: n.p.), resulting in 'an eternity of mockery' (Coumts, 2013: n.p.). However, after they stopped laughing, Prince Edward Island sent a hundred volunteers and snow-clearing equipment up to Toronto in an effort to help out.

Another example is the character Ted O'Malley in Wayne Johnston's novel *The Story of Bobby O'Malley* (1985). O'Malley is a television weather forecaster who goes through life mostly vilified. Says the protagonist, his son Bobby (Johnston, 1985: 22): 'In our town my father was both shaman and scapegoat ... people seemed to believe that my father not only forecast the weather, but somehow controlled it ... Whatever way you looked at it, he was an enemy of the people'.

In Tasmania, a distinctive feature is the ‘Bridgewater Jerry’, a unique fog bank that rolls down the Derwent Valley on cold winter mornings, through the city of Hobart to the ocean. Tasmanian artist Tony Woodward captured the phenomenon in his public art sculpture *Jerry*, 2008 (Corporate Arts Scheme, 2012: n.p.). Located in a plaza in the town of Bridgewater, 19 kilometres upriver from Hobart, the sculpture depicts a stylized human figure embracing a miniature version of the town of Bridgewater. It provides ‘a visual delight for the community and fosters a sense of place by reinforcing a distinctively local weather phenomenon’ (Arts Tasmania, 2008: n.p.).



Figure 3.2 – *Jerry*, 2008, by Tony Woodward (used with permission of the artist)

In some instances, a byproduct of the weather is the light; many visual artists find *island* light particularly conducive to their art. There is no consensus as to why island light is different. One can speculate that the phenomenon is due to moisture or certain particles in the air around islands; or that the air might be particularly clean as a result of fewer manufacturing plants or being isolated from those on the mainland; or that the layers of air over islands create a higher degree of nuance in colour.

Artists in Bornholm, Denmark, say that it is the reflection off the water that creates a different tone to the light; artists travel there because they love to paint the light. Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.), author of *The Alphabet of Light and Dark* (2003), partially attributes it to Tasmania's extreme southern latitude and times of dawn and dusk where you get 'liminal light'; where 'those strange in-between times are longer'. But, she asks:

How does it make sense to say that the light is different on Bruny Island than it is at Kettering? That doesn't make sense at all. Yet it feels as if it is. And I suspect that it has to do with when you go to Bruny Island you become the kind of person who notices the quality of light. Before you go you're really too preoccupied with other things. It's about entering another space where you're more observant of those sorts of things.

For me it was always driving home at the end of an adventure, where we'd been away on the boat or whatever. Driving back along the channel and always the light would be falling at the end of the day. You get that spectacular horizontal light on gum trees. There's nothing like it. I love it.

Her words, 'you become the kind of person who notices the quality of light' when you travel to an island, resonate. Slowing down and paying attention—to the minutiae of one's natural surroundings and to time passing—is part of life on that particular island.

Painter David Keeling (2011: n.p.), too, says Tasmanian light is different from mainland light. He repeats something that Australian painter Jeffrey Smart, who lived most of his life in Italy, told him: 'Look, if you want to get light in Australia like Italy, you have to go to Tasmania'. Keeling remembers his first time in Europe, in 1979:

It really struck me that the sky seemed lower, it was like—because it's so bright here, I suppose, at times. For me, where it really is similar is dawn and dusk here. It's much different on the mainland. It doesn't seem to last as long, and it's a very quick thing. But here the shadows get longer and longer. I felt, that, for me, that's where the real drama is extracted. And I guess that's similar,

Tuscan light, is, can be, very similar to here. It's that foggy sort of misty light, which ... you don't get on the mainland. I find sometimes here that the light is so clear, during the day, but as it gets towards dusk, it gets this crimson. And you can see it in the morning, sometimes when you look at the mountain, that mountain is almost red. There's a crimson light that is in the background. I try and emulate that in the paintings by quite often glazing with a crimson, and then working back over so it sort of glows from underneath. Danish painting is really interesting. It's closer to Tasmanian and New Zealand painting ... I think Tasmanian painting and Tasmanian literature in a way is closer to New Zealand than it is to mainland Australia. I went to New Zealand a couple of years ago, and painted over there, and it was very similar.

Although sculptor Peter Adams (2011: n.p.) says light does not have as strong an influence on his art because he is not a painter, he adds his voice to the chorus about light in Tasmania:

I do notice it for sure. The crispness of it ... the cleanness, there's not the particulates in the air because it's swept clean all the way from Argentina. By the time it gets here the rains have taken all the particulates out, except when there's forestry burnoffs, then it can get a little more fuzzy. Sunsets are great. For me, especially here, during the equinox times, when the sun's setting almost straight off that way, the trees have the canopy, but the sun is bouncing off the water, then it casts light off these walls. It's not a direct light, it's a bouncing.

Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.), who lives and paints in Longford, located in central Tasmania, notes the differences between light found in the interior and light experienced on the east and north-west coasts:

Another reason why I love this place [Longford] is the light is golden and yellow. If I take a picture of you here, and I take a picture of where I was yesterday, [in] one, you'll be green, and [in the other], you'll be lovely and rosy and healthy-looking. Which is here. It's just because of all that green and blue in that environment, that the light is cold. I often find the light on the coast disappointing. I'm very aware when you go to Bass Strait, often this time of the

year it's just silver because the light's so low it reflects on it, the sky's darker than the ocean. And then on the east coast you've always got the sun behind you so the sea's dark green. They're the two coasts I get to see. So I guess it's different when you go to the west coast as well.

These two seemingly opposite opinions about island light reflect the size of the island, since both Tasmania and Newfoundland are large enough land masses to be far away from the ocean and never experience light that is affected by the ocean. It also reflects artists' various experiences and preferences. Another opinion comes from Bruny Island painter Michaye Boulter (2011), who spent many of her formative years sailing from Australia to Canada and back. She now paints enormous canvases of ocean and sky. She says her work is all about the light:

I'm creating a sort of a harmony where the light kind of melds the land into the sea and sky, or the reverse, it's sort of a sharp contrast. It's that vertical form inside, around that ephemeral sort of world, then you've got these hard rocks or islands. Around Tasmania we've got so many islands and they are all different varying shapes and sizes, and really quite dramatic sometimes, and seem quite unreal.

For some artists, light is the most important factor to shape their artistic practice. However, for Adam Young (2012: n.p.), the element that is internalized most in his painting is Fogo Island's wind. He says, 'even though it's empty there's so much movement happening all the time, all the way around. The grass is moving, the water is constantly—and the wind and the clouds and everything'. The fluid lines of Young's houses and stages are entirely shaped by the wind; nowhere in his paintings do you find a ninety-degree angle. The brightly coloured buildings take on characteristics of people and become almost alive as they sway in the wind, their existence—like the Newfoundlanders themselves, he says—holding on—precarious, perilous, tenuous—to the rock of Fogo Island.



Figure 3.3 – *Shed Party*, 2011, by Adam Young
(used with permission of the artist; ayoungstudios.com)

Young (2012: n.p.) says:

There's nothing like the wind on Fogo Island because there's nothing to block it. Especially in Joe Batt's where we were, and here [at Shoal Bay], now. The wind just [Adam makes a sound like wind]—there's no stopping it. You've got to brace yourself when it comes, it's that type of wind. It's like a hurricane all the time. Most times, like today, calm day, beautiful, right? But every now and then you'll get those windstorms, and it's just crazy, unnerving. But you get used to it, I guess.

Like Young's 'winds like a thousand horses', writer Bernice Morgan anthropomorphizes wind, too, in her novel, *Random Passage* (1992: 32): 'At night she listens to the wind growl. She imagines the wind as a great white beast, humped just outside the Cape, holding them all between its terrible paws. Its breath shakes the shed'. The wind shapes the land and the shore, trees and crops, house placement and construction techniques. As Morgan's character, craftsman Ben Andrews, walks the woods, studying each tree, 'looking for those with the long, graceful lines of a ship ... He comes to believe that in such places the ground contains something that attracts sea wind, drawing it down into roots, shaping trees to fit the sea' (1992: 81).

The wind affects ferry schedules and fishing trips, bridge access and school closures—particularly when a Nor'easter is predicted. The wind even affects the way people walk, shoulders hunched up around ears to prevent cold fingers from inching past your collar, down your back. Islanders get used to it, and make peace with it—sort of. They complain to one another—but rarely to mainlanders—and take advantage of direct flights to sun destinations such as Cuba and Mexico and the Dominican Republic, Bali and North Queensland, whenever they can. Islanders know that unceasing exposure to the whims of the wind is one of the prices you pay for living on an island.

While spending time on Tasmania's 'outrigger islands' (Hay, 2012: n.p.), where 'the wind weaves pattern and chaos—simultaneously—from light, water, reed and dune grass', artist Sue Lovegrove, too, finds inspiration from the wind. Painting on Macquarie, Egg, Maatsuyker, and Tasman Islands, Lovegrove created a series of paintings called 'The Shape of the Wind,' using white, 'the default colour of space', to represent the wind. While on Maatsuyker Island, she painted the clouds, developing the patience to 'sit, watch, listen', becoming 'an advocate of what she calls cloud time'. In order to 'learn to paint the shape of the wind' (Hay, 2012), Lovegrove says, 'You take the landscape inside yourself, feel its pattern inside your body'. In 2012, an exhibition called *Glimpse*, consisting of her most recent paintings from 'The Shape of the Wind' series, 'explores the patterning and rhythms of the island through the complex linear structure of the island's grasses'.

3.7 The edge

I love maps. A map implies an island (Wood, 2010: n.p.).

A memory. Elementary school, social studies, map-making time. The land: green. The edge: a thin black line. The ocean: a strip of blue, maybe 1/8" wide. But the teacher tells us we can't do our strokes parallel to the line: rather they must be perpendicular, like brushing your teeth up and down, not across, because the plaque will get trapped underneath the gums. It is hard on little hands, holding your pencil crayon like that. But making a furry edge to the land is what the teacher wants. Knowing that if you step on it, you sink. And it

was kind of pretty, like my grandmother crocheting a lacy edge on the afghan she knit. My map almost looks like art.

A story from Tasmania. At a dinner party with friends I remark on how many maps of Tasmania hang on kitchen walls, bathroom walls, in hallways. They say, we hadn't really noticed. They say, we're from Canberra and we don't have a map of Canberra on our wall. Because it doesn't have a border. Tasmania has a border. It is like it is art.

A story from Newfoundland. I go into a bookstore on Duckworth Street in St John's. I ask the owner where the Grey Islands are. He gets out a pad of post-it notes and a fine-tipped pen and draws me a map. All the peninsulas and capes, all the inlets and bays. A minute or two and his pen does not break from paper. The island of Newfoundland on a blue post-it. I take it home. Hang it by my desk. Resist the urge to get out my pencil crayons, colour in the lines.

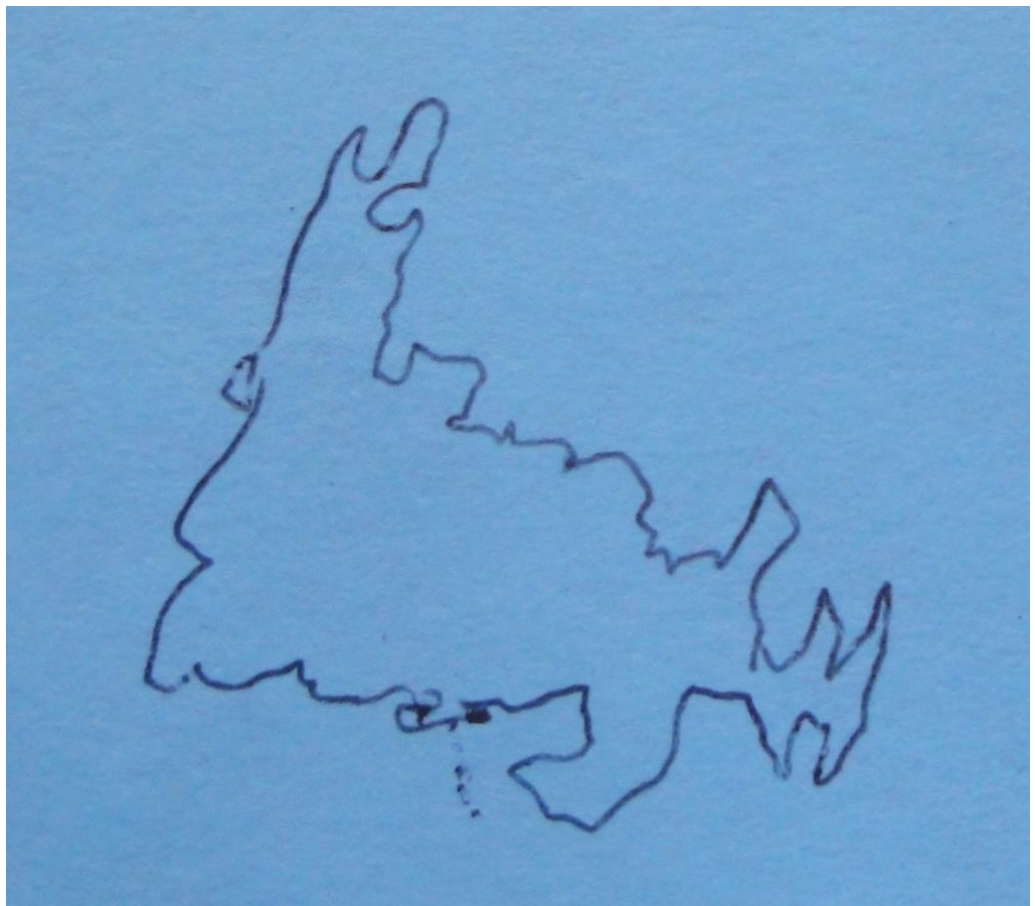


Figure 3.4 – *Memory map of home*, 2012

Meeting places are dynamic places, and islands have several. Of course, the meeting place islanders know best is the shore, physically a rich ecotone²¹ where two ecosystems meet, and where land and sea life are often interdependent. In Newfoundland this is called the ‘landwash’. As a liminal space (from the word *limen*, meaning threshold), the shore is the ocean’s doorstep, and vice-versa—what someone (and I cannot find who) calls ‘an em-dash of connection’.²² In his book, *The Human Shore: Seacoasts in History* (2012), John Gillis calls shore dwellers throughout the ages *Homo littoralis*: humans in the littoral zone.

Often called a ‘shoreline’, this space is more of a band than a line, where the width changes with the rise and fall of the tide. John Cameron (2011: n.p.) thinks it a misnomer to call it a shore/*line*:

It’s not a line. It’s actually a constantly moving interface. The times I’ve become really aware of it, going down on the shore, is when we’re at the change of the tide, and that constant movement between what is land and what is covered by water. Shoreline is much more than just a dividing point, or a dividing line between two things. It’s more like a world unto itself. I call it a relationship rather than a line.

And, as Beer has noted, chaos theory according to Mandelbrot dictates that ‘the circumference of shore is so shifting as to be infinite and depends upon the chosen scale of description’. Beer (2003: 27) asks: ‘Do we count in every last indentation of the bay, the cliff as it crumbles, the packed grain of sand against the wall?’ Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) visualizes Tasmania’s shore in similar terms: ‘One of the things I love about the edge of Tasmania is that kind of Mandelbrot curling up of peninsulas or bits sort of starting to peel off, it’s the edges of what’s pretty’.

²¹ As Gillis (2014: 159) writes: ‘Ecotone combines the Latin term ‘*eco*’ (derived from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning house) with *tone*, which means tension in Greek’.

²² Despite not knowing who said this, I have included the phrase since it appeals to my poetic (and editorial) sensibility in the way an em-dash, when used properly in writing, separates *and* connects.

Living within a set parameter, defined by water, defines island life emphatically. While some chafe at the edges, others feel safe and comforted (for further exploration of this idea, see Chapter 5). Says musician and composer Carey Lewincamp (2011: n.p.):

I'm not an artist, but I'm a person who draws, and likes to have the boundaries dark and grounded around the edges. So I'm a person who likes things being defined. And I suppose that gives definition to where I live. That creates that sense of wholeness, doesn't it, that sense of definition that we can relate to—we all like to put things in boxes and we all like to have the parameters described to us, whether it's in behaviour, or whether it's where you are, or what you're drawing. Yes, I can now see—I've put it into my consciousness, all these things I've never actually really thought before and I've lived here all my life.

On a small island, it is virtually impossible to get lost, because no matter where you walk, you'll come to the edge at some point. Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) says the edge helps her know where she is as it is a place from which she can orient herself: 'You only know where you are when you're on the edge, because everything else is confusing or in the middle of something. The edge you always know where you are'.

Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) likes the fact that the edge defines her place:

I think it sets limits all the time. And I think I quite like that. I think I quite like knowing that if I start walking, I'll only get so far. I think I like knowing what my patch is. I think I like knowing I can go that far and then if I went any further I'd be off the edge of it. I'm very comfortable with that sense of having a defined patch. People put up fences, don't they? People draw state lines or whatever. But if you live on an island you don't have to—it's already done ... This is the patch in which you can play out your life, and you can either try to make a difference or not, or try to make an impact or not, but that's your piece of paper. So instead of somebody giving you a massive great big thing where you can sort of wander all over it, someone's given you a paper that's this big. I suppose I like having limits defined and an island does that for you.

For Lewincamp (2011: n.p.), heading to the shore is like ‘reaching the edge of his connection with the rest of the world. It’s like exploring the little toe or the tip of your head, or the outside. You’ve reached the outside’. Growing up in the northern suburbs of Hobart close to the bush allowed him to explore the limits of the neighbourhood:

As a kid I’d look at the top of, say for example, that hill over there and say ... one day I’m gonna explore over there, I’ll get up that hill and see what it looks like from up there. And then I did. Then you’re there, and you say, I’m gonna explore that spot. As a child you move out like this. Those things when I grew up were really important. That sense of discovery, that sense of being an explorer. So I suppose that in relating to that you’ve come to the end of the exploration, and the boundaries.

In this story, Lewincamp points out the importance of exploring the bounds of his childhood environs in relation to his adult life. For Tasmanian writer Ben Walter (2011: n.p.), borders, in particular, are significant:

Borders that you can hold in your head can make a big difference. When you can visualize spatially a border, both on a map and in physical reality, that must change the way that you think about or reinforce your identity, perhaps. Maybe the fact that [Tasmania] feels small in relation to a much larger land mass provides some of that sense of border. It’s the place I recognise and value and I can border it easily by sea—I can recognise where it starts and where it finishes. So I can identify myself with Tasmania, say that I love Tasmania, I can identify with it because I know where it starts and stops—it’s not just an arbitrary line drawn on a map.

Of particular interest to several artists is the edge, where land meets water. Perhaps one of the reasons they are attracted to the shore’s edge is because the human body is connected through edges, too. As John Murray (1999) reminds us: ‘Every person born in this world has a coast, an edge, a boundary, a transitional zone between themselves and the world’ (in Gillis, 2012: 158). Greg Denning (1980: 3) takes this one step further; of his essay, ‘Islands and Beaches’, he says, ‘“Islands and Beaches” is a metaphor for the different ways in which human beings construct their

worlds and for the boundaries that they construct between them ... The islands I speak of are less physical than cultural’.

For Peter Adams the edge ‘keeps his energy from bleeding away’ (2011: n.p.). It is also a metaphor for his life as an artist living in Tasmania:

The name of my blog is ‘Life at the Edge’. Sometimes I go back and forth, life at the edge, or life *on* the edge. I think I changed it at one point. I never know which is more appropriate. Life on the edge implies on a razor’s edge almost, like you’re going to leap off of it. You’re on edge, you’re emotionally on edge. At the edge, you’ve come up to a wall, or to cliff, you either jump or you just observe. You look out that way and it’s the open ocean all the way to the Antarctic, so we’re at the edge of the last land mass.

Nothing imprints the edge of an island more distinctively on the human brain than its outline on a map. And knowing that the outline is an act of geography is a powerful identifier. The map of Tasmania, with its quasi-triangular shape, has become part of a tourism schtick at Salamanca market, with T-shirts, tea towels, and aprons of the much-joked-about ‘map of Tassie’—a much-used Australia-wide signifier for the female pubic area. The map of Newfoundland is much more sedate. Marjorie Doyle (Doyle, 2005: 6) describes the shape of Newfoundland as a ‘silhouette’, ‘a lone raft in a clear sea, as alluring as a desktop icon and being a symbol of home and nationhood’. Doyle (2012: n.p.) says: ‘There’s something about the shape in Newfoundland, it’s not that it’s distinctive, I suppose, but it was so identified for us so early on. It feels to me like the most unique and exciting and distinctive shape in the world’. Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.), who brought along a map of Newfoundland with him for our interview, agrees. The fact that Newfoundland is an island is ingrained in Newfoundlanders’ psyches: ‘the general geographical fact of the island is all over the place’—on signs, monuments, T-shirts, tea towels, tourism literature.

Finally, another meeting place that is not on a map is the skin of the water that divides air from water. Richard Wastell (2011: n.p.) observes insect life just above the water, and knows that here is a good place to fish. This surface tension is described in Louise Oxley’s (2008: 76) poem, ‘Buoyancy’, where the whirligig beetle hangs on the surface, ‘dimpling the meniscus’, ‘spellbound between the

elements’; it is ‘marooned, held by the skin of the lake / in a planetary gyre, a half-eye on one life and a half on the other’. And seeing that skin of water from below is something swimmers know. Nicole Holyer (2010: 71), a fiction writer from Brisbane, Australia, has an evocatively different take on this when she writes: ‘Jess had to duck to keep from hitting her head on the surface of the ocean’.

3.8 The horizon

*from ‘When you come in late to an island’
(for Adam Young)*

*but it’s also hard living
not in a box
hard getting used to seeing
the horizon all the way round
losing yourself
uncluttering yourself*

That place where sky meets water fascinates artists, literally and metaphorically. It seems fitting that the word ‘horizon’ comes from ‘bounding circle’; and that ‘horizontal’ comes from ‘horizon’.²³ Depending on what the sky is doing (clear, foggy, grey), or the colour of the sea (turquoise, blue, grey), the horizon line can be obvious, or not. Sometimes it looks like the line where the sea and sky are divided in two, and sometimes it appears to be one enormous plane. Not only is it the junction or apparent boundary between sea and sky, it is symbolic of the division between earth and heaven. Here is a point of tension where things meet, just like at the littoral zone. And, again, as discussed above in ‘the edge’, some human beings like lines and feel good within lines.

Tasmanian painter Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.) recognises his audience’s very real need for a horizon—to the point that his paintings *without* horizons did not sell:

²³ 1540–50; < Latin *horizōn* < Greek *horízōn* (*kýklos*) bounding (circle), equivalent to *horíz* (ein) to bound, limit + *-ōn* present participle suffix (nominative singular); replacing Middle English *orizonte* < Middle French < Latin *horizontem*, accusative of *horizōn* (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/horizon>).

I'm trying to reduce nature to its barest elements and still make it work as a painting in a physical and formal sense. I still have an horizon in the paintings because it's so critical to the viewer to successfully read. It's almost a very human line. I've dropped the horizon out of my compositions a few times—I've still got those paintings.

Louise Oxley quotes Emerson in her poem, 'Isolations' (2011b: 111): 'The eye demands a horizon'. Oxley (2011a: n.p.) says:

The horizon is the limit of what we can see. Does it provide us with a vantage point or something to look for? It seems to me a very strong feature of life, some part of life, the horizon. There's something about where you can see your limits. Maybe that's similar to being on an island. That's where your eye travels. There is something about water. Maybe it's the possibilities of what lies beyond it. So if you kept going, how far do you have to go before you get somewhere else? Then when you get somewhere else, it IS somewhere else. Where, if you were in Central Australia, it is somewhere else, but it is similar land. If you go away out to sea, you're going to get to another island, or another coast, or another country. Something strange or foreign.

And just why do we need a horizon? Says Jean-Yves Vigneau (n.d.: n.p.), a painter from Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec: 'When the sea stretches out as far as the eye can see, the mind sets about inventing horizons'. The eye needs a focal point, a resting spot. It brings order and balance to our eye and brain. The horizon is a point of tension, of interest or curiosity. It makes us feel contained, comforted, gives us a reference for our eye and our sanity. It is like the skin on our bodies, the edge of our personal space, the sides of a box, or the walls of our house—all of which satisfy our need for containment—while representing that which we often feel compelled to push.

The paradox is that many islanders feel trapped on the mainland, where they often cannot see the horizon. Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.) finds the mainland 'too big to own', and living there is like being 'a bird in a cage'. He returns to Fogo Island and, surrounded on all sides, feels less contained, more free, looking out to the infinitude of ocean, to the horizon. Similarly, Adam Young (2012: n.p.) finds peace in the

containment that he feels when he can see the horizon all round. Within it he can ‘breathe and reflect. Life gets crazy anyway, no matter where you are. But at least you can stop and take a breath. The horizon—it’s funny because people who live here, they love it. But it’s almost like they don’t know any different until they go away. And then they realise what they’ve lost’.

Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) has spent her lifetime looking at horizons, ‘those horizontal lines of distance and vastness, and openness, space’, first as a child looking out from a boat, and then as an adult from her home on Bruny Island. Boulter says the horizon is a very strong psychological presence:

Anytime you look at the sea it becomes a point of possibilities. The point where the sea and sky meet is always very interesting to me, being they’re such a reflection of each other, and they’re both sort of formless in their own way. There’s always that relationship between the two that I find really exciting. I guess it’s the limited possibilities of what you do, so the limited number of distractions, too, that maybe hone your eye towards that horizon that could otherwise be missed with a whole lot of stuff that goes on in our world in front of us, you take it all away and look at the horizon. So definitely that world of the sea and the sky just is always in front of me. And of course, as soon as you get to the horizon you make haste for another one. The never-ending box of chocolates.

Writer Harry Thurston (2012: n.p.) is one of the few people who have had the privilege of visiting the extremely remote Sable Island, a low-lying island²⁴ located 175 kilometres southeast of the closest point of mainland Nova Scotia in the North Atlantic. ‘It is one of the most fascinating places I’ve ever been’, says Thurston (2012: n.p.). ‘The horizon of sea and sky is so dominant. You feel kind of suspended—you almost feel like you’re walking on water’. The island is inhabited year-round by wild horses and a population of five who staff a meteorological research station. Only 1.5 kilometres at its widest point and 42 kilometres long, the

²⁴ The highest point is 28 metres or 92 feet above sea level (<http://www.peakbagger.com/peak.aspx?pid=27183>).

island is slowly moving as sand is eroded on the western shore and new sand is added on the eastern side.

The word 'horizon' is also used often as a metaphor, the edge or limit of a person's interest, education, understanding or imagination. The mother in Alistair MacLeod's (2000: 6) story 'The Boat' is one such person whose horizon was narrow: 'My mother was of the sea, as were all of her people, and her horizons were the very literal ones she scanned with her dark and fearless eyes'. Yet it can also represent something we are heading towards, something in the future, the unknown. Even though it looks like the end or the edge, we know in our heads that it is not the end, that it keeps going. We look upon the infinitude and see the horizon, we sail toward it but can never reach it. Those who believed that the world was flat thought you would sail over the edge and disappear. The horizon and the magnitude of all that water can be overwhelming, yet we sail toward it. *Pirates of the Caribbean's* Johnny Depp (in Smith, 2011: n.p.) captures this feeling in an interview in *Vanity Fair*:

One of the things that helped me most with Captain Jack was a book by Bernard Moitessier, and it's where I found the last line for the first *Pirates* movie. The writers were stumped, and they'd say, Well, what about this? And nothing seemed to click. I was reading this Moitessier book on sailing the earth, and he had written about how the ultimate for a sailor was the horizon, and to be able to attain that horizon, which you never get to, which is why it keeps pushing you forward. I thought, That's it! That's it! So I went to them and said, I've got a line for you: 'Bring me that horizon.' And they looked at it and went, Nah, that's not it. But about 45 minutes later they came to me and went, That's the line ... 'Bring me that horizon.' That's what they all want. That's what all those guys want. Get me that horizon. And you never get there.

Reaching the horizon is one of our compulsions, like Michayle Boulter's 'never-ending box of chocolates'. Like life itself, you are compelled, urged, to keep going until you come to the other end, death. The final horizon. The final crossing.

*from 'Everything returns eventually ...'
(for Frank Ledwell)*

...
*As violet night comes down,
you bide your time,
waiting to hoist your sail
for that last short leg to home.*

3.9 Concluding thoughts

*from 'Always Leaving',²⁵
(for Michaye Boulter)*

*The sea your road
the hole in the sky
your light to travel by*

...
*Today the sky a curtain you paint
to see what lies behind*

In this chapter I have explored the role of the ocean in creating 'islandness', the mystique, the allure, that is so hard to define—but that has to do with water, the most basic of elements from which all life has sprung. It has to do with the separation from the mainland: the 'island-self' and 'mainland-other' (Stratford, 2008: 161). It is also the dynamism that comes from seeming binaries: the physical space of an island that is set apart, isolated, and bounded by a medium—a medium that by its make-up also connects. The edge of the land meets the edge of the ocean, creating an ecotone that is rich in life forms and movement, a tidal zone that is ever-changing. The edge is a threshold, the doorway to an untamed, unruly ocean, one of the planet's least-explored geographies. From the edge you have an unobstructed view of the horizon—unattainable yet always beckoning. And to get to an island, to succumb to its allure, you have to experience a crossing. And even the shortest distance over water—the crossing—can be an adventure as your body breaches what *should* be impassable, the phenomenology of which is explored in Chapter 4.

²⁵ The poem 'Always Leaving' for Michaye Boulter is my poetic response to her painting, *As we left*, 2010.



Figure 3.5 – *As we left*, 2010, by Michaye Boulter (used with permission of the artist)

Chapter 4 The crossing

What distinguishes islands from coasts, which are also shorelines, is the fact that you have to do some kind of crossing (Cameron, 2011: n.p.).

I am writing this chapter from my friends' boat, *Just Cause*, which is moored at berth 55 at Peake's Quay in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. I am sitting in its cabin, on an upholstered bench about a foot above the surface of the water. Most of the view through the oval porthole across the table is taken up by the maroon-coloured boat at berth 56; water reflects and shimmers off its shiny hull. I can see a sliver of reddish rocks off the breakwater that keeps the marina calm, and above it a profile of trees across the harbour. The water is slate grey, in constant ripple. I hear its gentle lap against this hull, several decibels lower than the indistinguishable music from someone's radio across the quay. My view bobs slightly up and down when a boat sails by; my head and stomach are valiantly trying to adjust. If it were not for a couple of ropes, an orange electrical cable, and white water hose, I would be on my own floating island, totally separate from the island that is my mainland of choice.



Figure 4.1 – *Just Cause* at 55 (photo by the author)

I reflect on the importance of boats on and to islands. This boat I am sitting on is a pleasure craft, a dream made real for its owners to be able to enjoy to the fullest the water that surrounds them, to allow them time away from the busy-ness of life as they have the privilege of experiencing their island from another angle. Around me are similar boats—mostly fancy new ones with clever names like *Fahrfrümwürken* and *MerSea* and *Island Time*, scattered among some sailboats, a catamaran, a few refitted lobster-cum-party boats, and a tour boat that takes tourists out into the Northumberland Strait four times a day. Frequently I see the orange bus-sized amphibian, the *Harbour Hippo*, taking its load of mostly tourists for a chug around the harbour.

But sailing through the harbour mouth right now is the gravel barge. Yesterday it was an oil tanker, and tomorrow it will be a cruise ship: one of sixty-nine that will sail into port between May and October 2013 (Charlottetown Seaport, 2013: n.p.). Despite the fact that Prince Edward Island is now joined to the mainland by a bridge, these sea links are still vital to our sustainability as an island community, however diminished in infrastructure footprint they might be. Whereas at one time Peake's Quay was a mass of wooden wharves and oil tanks, Charlottetown Harbour has followed the trend of port cities around the world whereby the workings of the harbour have been either shunted to the outskirts of cities to make way for gentrification or tourism, or eliminated altogether as road and air links carry on the task of moving goods (Gillis, 2012: 162).

Prince Edward Island poet Milton Acorn (2002: 49) may have been prescient when he wrote his poem 'Charlottetown Harbour' in 1960:

An old docker with gutted cheeks,
time arrested in the used-up-knuckled hands
crossed on his lap, sits
in a spell of the glinting water.

He dreams of times in the cider sunlight
when masts stood up like stubble;
but now a gull cries, lights,
flounces its wings ornately, folds them,
and the waves slop among the weed-grown piles.

When I first moved to the Island, the waterfront was an oil tank farm with creosote-soaked wharves jutting out into the water; the only public access to the water was at the one Yacht Club. Now, those tanks have been removed, and most of Charlottetown Harbour is rimmed by concrete or wooden boardwalks, houses or condos, three marinas, and two parks. Some of the docks remain, meaning that several times a month hotel guests and luxury-condo-dwellers contend with the noise and exhaust fumes and dust from dump trucks hauling away loads of gravel and salt just arrived from Nova Scotia; or hauling in loads of potatoes to be shipped as far away as Russia. On an almost daily basis in the summer they share the waterfront with tourists and buses and cruise ships. It is an uneasy truce that is part and parcel of island life. But, as city planners work to make Charlottetown Harbour a more liveable space, even these vestiges of an island's work engine might eventually be shunted to the sidelines, upriver and out of sight and mind of the city's gentry, or eliminated altogether as the powers-that-be decide that it is more cost-efficient to truck gravel and salt and potatoes across the Confederation Bridge.

It was not always this way. When I arrived in 1983 it was by ferry, the *Abegweit*, which crossed the Northumberland Strait separating the Island from the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Everything that Islanders could not supply themselves came by boat. I soon learned how strongly the ferry symbolised Islanders' independence; when it stopped running because of wind or ice or mechanical breakdown, Islanders would quip, 'the mainland is cut off again' (MacDonald, 2000: 38).

I learned how the crossing had changed over four centuries of habitation, from steamships in spring, summer, and fall to 'iceboats' that crossed the shifting ice in winter. Iceboats were 'light rowboats with iron strips along each side of the keel and a leather shoulder harness by each oarlock' (Beck, 1996: 136) that would get you through the 'lolly': 'the confused state where salt water can't decide whether to stay liquid or freeze solid' (Beck, 1996: 135–6):

They were simple to operate. In open water, the crew rowed. Whenever they came to a pan or pack of ice they jumped out, slung the harness over their shoulders, and pulled the boat along the ice. On coming to open water, they

jumped back in and rowed until they found more ice to run on. Passengers had the option of sitting in with the mail or running along with the crew. The incentive to run with the boat was twofold. One, the fare was cheaper. Two, it kept you warm.

In the 1800s, the cost for men was \$5.00; for men and boys who wanted to help and pull it was \$2.00. The fare for women and the elderly was \$4.00 as they were not allowed to help (Government of PEI, 2013: n.p.). In the 1870s, winter steamers were brought in, followed by a rail ferry in 1917, which carried automobiles on rail cars.

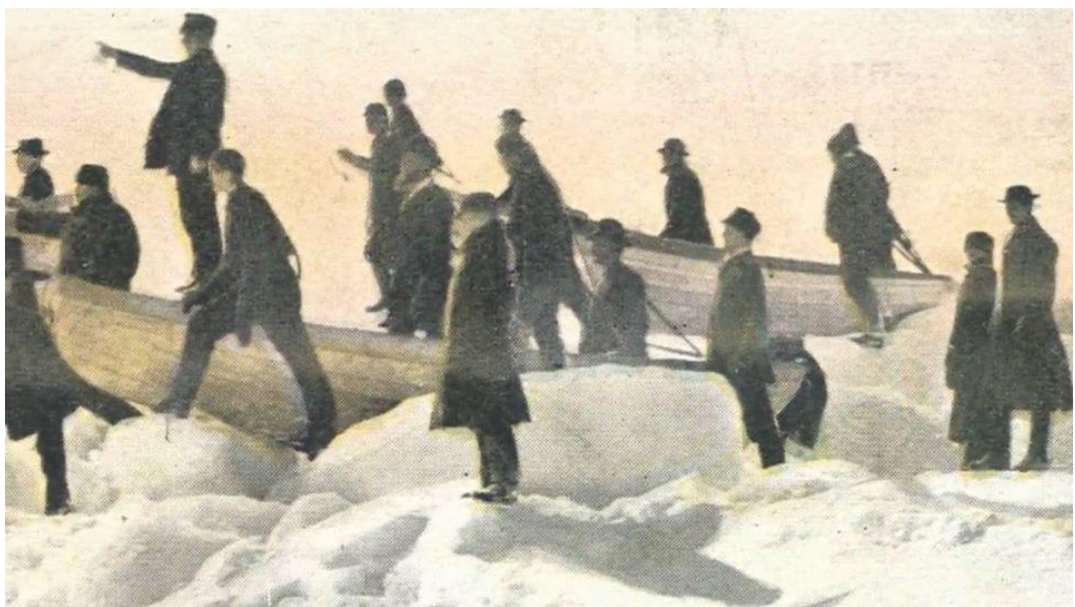


Figure 4.2 – Iceboats to Prince Edward Island (PEI Public Archives and Records Office)

In 1938 came the modern roll-on, roll-off ('RORO') car ferries. But since 1873, when a continuous link to the mainland was part of Prince Edward Island's guarantee for joining the Canadian Confederation, there had been talk of a 'fixed link'—a tunnel, causeway, bridge, or a combination thereof—to the mainland. Over a century later, government decided to test the waters with a plebiscite: in 1988, 52 per cent of Islanders voted for a fixed link, resulting in a commitment by the federal government to build a bridge. The debate leading up to the plebiscite was fierce, pitting the 'Friends of the Island' against 'Islanders for a Better Tomorrow', the former arguing that a bridge would be an ecological disaster and a waste of money, would lead to an erosion of 'the island way of life' and would primarily benefit non-Islanders; while

the latter said more efficient transport would help build our economy through growth in industry and tourism (Begley, 1993; MacDonald, 2000).

In 1997, the world's longest bridge over ice-covered waters opened: the thirteen-kilometre-long Confederation Bridge. Since then, high winds and severe weather have restricted crossings on the bridge to vehicles several times a year, but as of 27th March 2014, it has been closed to ALL traffic only eleven times (cbc.ca) due to either extreme weather or collisions on the bridge. The jury is still out on whether the bridge has affected 'the Island way of life', or if it has benefited the Island's economy to the extent promised, or feared (Baldacchino & Spears, 2007: 62). But I still miss taking the ferries, and whenever I can, between May and December when the Northumberland Ferry service is operational, I drive to Wood Islands, at the eastern end of PEI, and sail to Caribou, Nova Scotia—even though it costs nearly twice as much as taking the bridge (\$79 CAD vs. \$45 CAD as of summer 2014).



Figure 4.3 – Confederation Bridge, Prince Edward Island (photo by the author)

From *Just Cause*, I think about how boats have been the connection between landmasses for millennia. I think about the ferry crossings I have made over the years.²⁶ When I left Tasmania, it was by the *Spirit of Tasmania* from Devonport, Tasmania, to Melbourne, Australia; I said ‘good-bye, one kilometre at a time’ (‘Leaving by boat’, Appendix B). I think about what I did on those boats: walked the decks, played cards, took photos, ate, drank, slept, talked, read, gazed. Learning at a young age how ferry schedules governed time, and all about ‘hurry up and wait’. Fighting with my brother while freezing or sweltering in ferry line-ups. All part and parcel of island life. As sociologist and mobilities researcher Mimi Sheller (2012) writes: ‘Islanders dwell thanks to many different kinds of coming and going, pausing and waiting, producing a choreography of uneven spatialities and temporalities’. In this day and age, one can rarely live on an island without travelling to and from, on and off—and this is yet another factor in defining people’s sense of islandness.

4.1 ‘When did you first become aware that you lived on an island?’

*from ‘If time should last’
(for Bernice Morgan)*

*Cape Island her ideal island
a thin neck of sand
attached
(but not when it storms)
to the big island.*

²⁶ These include the British Columbia ferries from Tsawwassen on the mainland to Swartz Bay, on Vancouver Island, or, similarly, Horseshoe Bay to Nanaimo; the Prince Edward Island ferries; the *Mirambeena*, from Snug, on the ‘mainland’ of Tasmania, to Bruny Island; *The Captain Earl Winsor*, from Farewell, on the ‘mainland’ of Newfoundland and Labrador, to Change Islands and Fogo Island; the Newfoundland ferries from North Sydney, Cape Breton Island, NS, to Port-aux-Basques, NL. And then there were the ferries amongst the Aland Islands (Finland), the Faroe Islands (Denmark), and the Whitsunday Islands (Australia); the ferry from Guernsey, in the Channel Islands, to tiny Herm Island, which had one dock for low tide and another, a 500-metre walk away, for high tide; the ferry from Bornholm, Denmark, to Ystad, Sweden, followed by a ferry from Landskrona, Sweden, to the island of Ven; and the ferries in Mexico, from Cancun to Isla Mujeres, from Chiquila to Holbox Island.

*She remembers the day
and the smell
as if it were yesterday.*

*Wartime and the train from St John's to Clarendville
large boat from Gambo to someplace else
smaller boat to the Cape.*

*Just a spit of land
but a playground for three meek
bare-kneed city kids
who had never been outside the garden
without their parents
dropped down on the beach
where their mother used to walk barefoot.*

My mother would talk about sitting on the wharf
and dangling her feet
playing under the wharf with pieces of shells
and bits of dishes and broken concrete all smooth from the sea
and there was sand
and there were gardens
and everyone grew everything
and the going back and forth.
I didn't know there was so much sand in Newfoundland
until I saw Cape Island.
As a child I thought it was just like heaven.

One of my favourite questions for my informants was to ask when they first became aware that they lived on an island.²⁷ Invariably they would say it was when they had to go off the island. Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.) of Newfoundland says there was nothing 'casual' about travel when she was young: 'You didn't just get in the car and go wherever. That there was a boat'. But, she says, for Newfoundlanders, travel on and off island was even more nuanced because, until 1949, when Newfoundlanders left they would be leaving their colony and going 'to Canada'. Decades after the

²⁷ While some of my participants replied practically to questions about the crossing, most of them talked about their experiences in more philosophical terms. (They mainly spoke about crossing by boat, but I shall discuss other modes of crossing to islands in Section 4.5.) Perhaps, by their very nature as artists, they are more conscious of the experience in metaphoric terms; they take the phenomenon inside, and use it to inform their art.

province became part of the Canadian Confederation, those who opposed joining still called the mainland ‘Canada’. Says Doyle:

I always had a sense of separateness. That’s because my mother was a strong anti-Confederate. I was born in 1953, so was raised during the 50s and 60s, and my mother used the word ‘Canada’ all the time for the mainland. We had a family business, and when businessmen would come she would always say, ‘the men are coming from Canada’. She wasn’t being cute. So her sense of Canada was something else, and Newfoundland was us. That was just part and parcel of our childhood.

Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.) became aware that she lived on an island when she went to another island: ‘Probably when we went to PEI as kids and we had to drive across the island and get on the boat and then drive and get on a boat to get on another island. And PEI is very clear that it’s an island’. Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.), too, remembers the boats of her childhood:

When you look at that map of Newfoundland ... like the Strait Shore, up around Wesleyville ... off that shore, just below Fogo, between Bonavista and Fogo, broadly speaking—off that shore, my Jesus, there was just islands and islands and islands and islands. People lived on those islands. Islands and ferries. Islands and ferries. You didn’t just get in the car and go wherever. There was a boat.

Wayne Johnston’s protagonist Joey Smallwood (based on the real-life politician who led the colony of Newfoundland into Confederation in 1949) describes his experience of leaving the island of Newfoundland for the first time in *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998: 143):

I had intended to stand at the railing of the ship until I could no longer see the island. It seemed like the appropriately romantic thing to do ... But though I stood staring at it for what seemed like hours, the island got no smaller ... And each time I went back out to see how much progress we had made, we seemed to have made none at all. The dark shape of the island was always there, as big as ever, as if we were towing it behind us.

In Smallwood's case, the image of towing his island behind him, taking it with him, is symbolic of his deeply physical attachment to place: the island will never leave him, even if he leaves it. Writer Susan Musgrave (2013: n.p.) feels a wrenching sensation when leaving her home island of Haida Gwai, off the coast of British Columbia, Canada's westernmost province: 'I remember watching the islands disappear, and feeling that horrible pang. Every time I felt like I was leaving a love affair, and would be horrible to live with for a whole week while I got over having to rip myself out of Haida Gwai'.

Tasmanian writer Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.) was eight when she first travelled to the mainland by ferry. She says it 'was a very physical and very visual reinforcement of the island, getting on the ferry and seeing Tasmania disappear and arriving somewhere very different'. From her home in Tinderbox on mainland Tasmania she looks from her front window across the Channel to Bruny Island. For her, the D'Entrecasteaux Channel is crucial to her sense of place:

That idea of crossings, the mythic qualities of water—underpin it all. We go to Bruny Island on the boat, which makes it about the journey as well as the arrival, the crossing over, leaving something behind, and coming to something completely different.

Others tie their realization that they lived on an island to a specific childhood incident of leaving and/or returning to the island, which they remember vividly. Writer Jack Hodgins (2013: n.p.), who grew up near Campbell River on northern Vancouver Island, says he was barely aware of the ocean when he was growing up. He never really thought of it as an island until the point, as a child, his brother had to go to Vancouver for an eye operation. He remembers being awakened at around two o'clock in the morning, and half-sleeping in the car on the drive down to Nanaimo where they caught the ferry to the mainland. He woke up and saw the water and, suddenly:

The whole world looked differently than it ever had before. I remembered vividly the steam ship, because it went from Nanaimo and landed in Vancouver, going under the Lion's Gate Bridge. Then on the drive home I realised there was a whole ocean to cross from home to get to the real world.

Tasmanian artist David Keeling (2011: n.p.) cannot remember a specific incident, but has always been conscious of being on an island because people he knew always had to cross the water to leave. At the same time, he associates his memory of the ocean, imprinted on him since childhood, with the excitement and pleasure of going on vacation to visit his aunt:

I think [for] people who grow up on islands, it's always that thing of coming and going. Coming back and going, coming back. There's something sort of really deeply poetic about it, I think, to leave it ... it's that symbolic thing of going across the water. It's a barrier, but it's a release as well. We had this auntie ... who had a house at a place called Weymouth, which is on the northeast coast of Tasmania, so we'd go there for holidays. I always remembered driving as a kid, and the first time you see the water: There it is! Just that little patch of blue. I've always been very conscious of the island thing here.

While thinking of the crossing as 'deeply poetic' is a rich way to explore one's sense of islandness, crossings can also involve being cooped up in a hot car with screaming children in a ferry line-up, being stuck in the ice for fourteen hours, being seasick one too many times, missing the ferry by a minute, or not being able to get to or from the island when your life might depend on it. Indeed, Phillip Vannini, in his research and articles on mobilities, and his book, *Ferry Tales* (2012: 193), uses interviews, embedded research, and autoethnography to explore the practical and poetic side of ferry culture on Canada's west coast, capturing another contradiction of island living:

the tension between the more fluid island time and the rigid timetables set by ferry schedules. In the words of a Vancouver-based mainlander: 'I never understood how people can say they move to small islands to be more in tune with a sense of place, when the ferries in actuality end up controlling every movement they make'.

4.2 The phenomenology of the crossing

The crossing, then—a symbol of separateness and connectedness—is one of the key markers of islandness. But the crossing, says Bruny Island's John Cameron (2011:

n.p.), ‘is not just about water’, but rather is a ‘multistep process’. Cameron differentiates between ‘crossing from and crossing to’; he calls it the ‘island crossing when you are crossing to the island, and the mainland crossing when you are crossing back to the mainland’. He says:

The journey, even post-crossing, is quite different each way. It’s a lovely thing to actually unpack. I’m sure, if somebody hasn’t done it, they bloody well ought to have done—phenomenological study of the ferry crossing, crossing to an island and back, in those sort of stages.

Cameron suggested I look at David Seamon (1979)’s work on dwelling, place, and belonging, and the stages of the journey in terms of immigration, and ‘translate it into the stages of the crossing’. In taking a phenomenological approach to the various stages of the crossing, Seamon suggests (n.d.: n.p.):

pay[ing] attention to specific instances of the phenomenon with the hope that these instances, in time, will point toward more general qualities and characteristics that accurately describe the essential nature of the phenomenon as it has presence and meaning in the concrete lives and experiences of human beings.

Vannini (2012: 13) takes on a similar task when he examines the role ferries play in the lives of west coast Canadian islanders and ‘coasters’ (those who live in mainland coastal communities that in many cases are only accessible by ferry). He chose a non-representational approach for his study of mobilities, focusing on ‘*practices and performances, experiences, and narratives*’ in his ‘*study of everyday life*’ (italics in original). Vannini’s research integrates theory and ethnography, matching up the performance and practice of travelling by ferry with place theory, in particular, how, as Ingold (2000: 192) writes:

place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there ... And these, in turn, depend on the kinds of activities in which its inhabitants engage. It is from this relational context of people’s engagement with the world, in the business of dwelling, that each place draws its unique significance.

Vannini draws on Ingold's (2007: 81) idea of 'meshwork ... the interwoven trails rather than a network of intersecting routes ... trails along which life is lived' to explain how islanders' and coasters' sense of place is affected by the crossing, and how crossings affect their sense of place. The 'mesh' provides an appropriate image for visualising how islanders' lives are integrated into comings and goings that are emblemised by the crossing.

By teasing out meanings imbued upon the various parts of the mesh that are involved in travelling by ferry, I explore what the crossing means to islanders' sense of islandness. In doing so, I begin with the question: what are the commonalities of the crossing? Because, of course, no two ferry crossings are ever the same—even though they probably feel like it if you are a regular commuter. But then there are the occasions that take you out of your routine: a pod of whales swims by, it will be a particularly rough crossing (or maybe that *is* the norm), the ferry is late (ditto), or a newbie takes *your* seat. So is there something that can be learned from people's experiences of the crossing that provide 'presence and meaning' in trying to determine the nuances of islandness? The following is an entry-level phenomenological look at the crossing, from the point of view of an islander going to the mainland, combining some of my own experiences with those of my participants, as well as some corroboration from other scholars. Think of it as a board game. You win if you make it back home, having accomplished all the things on your to-do list.

1. Planning.

You calculate which crossing you are going to catch in order to [fill in the blank] [go to a doctor's appointment /go to the dentist /get your hair cut /go to a concert/movie/play/class / do your shopping / catch a plane (leave the day before, then, just in case [fill in the blank] [the ferry breaks down / you miss the ferry / your car breaks down / there's a pile-up on the highway / other) / other]. If it's a day trip, you know you have to catch the first ferry, usually at crowpiss / sparrow's fart. Make sure you have enough [cash / debit/credit cards] for the crossing. Set your alarm [if you have one—people who move to an island often do so so they can throw away their alarm clocks], backtiming from the crossing you're aiming for, taking into

consideration how long it takes to get to the ferry and how long the line-up will be [which may change, depending on whether it's tourist season or not]. You get up, put on your going-to-the-mainland clothes, fill your travel mug, grab your breakfast-to-go [if you have one], and go. And if you're on Gabriola Island, you go online and check out the ferry cam (<http://www.ferrycam.clayrose.com/>) that points at the overflow sign (see 4).

Making a conscious decision to travel to or from an island is part of what sets islands apart from other destinations. It is not as easy as getting in the car or hopping on a train or a bike. Whether it be by plane or ferry, sailboat or speedboat, kayak or canoe—or maybe you decide to swim it—getting to an island involves crossing a body of water. And that generally involves some kind of planning. As Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) says, ‘you can’t just accidentally leave, it’s very deliberate. You can’t just be driving and get on autopilot the way that you do and suddenly end up in another state’.

The planning involved can be quite complex. Ferry panic, what Newfoundland photographer Bojan Fürst calls ‘the mortal fear of missing the first and last ferry’ (2012: n.p.), arriving a minute after it departs—governs islanders’ schedules, both coming and going. Prince Edward Island ‘snowbirds’ reminisce about driving home to the Island from Florida in spring, prior to the construction of the Confederation Bridge—how, when they would leave, they would calculate three days in advance which ferry they were going to catch, and make sure they timed their daily driving times accordingly. The worst thing was to get stuck in a ferry line-up—so close to home, and yet so far. My first visit to Fogo Island was with Bojan Fürst (2012: n.p.); he takes great pride in telling the story: ‘We made the ferry with twenty seconds to spare, and someone came in behind us’.

For anyone who cannot come or cannot leave because the line-up is too long or you are at the mercy of the ferry mechanics/the winds/the tides/the ice/other: you feel like your life is taken out of your control. This feeling can be irksome, especially if it happens regularly. You can rail against it, but eventually you have to give in. And perhaps you take it for what it is: a gift of time. Knowing that you are stuck there, and you cannot do a thing about it—you learn to switch gears, relax, and go with the

flow. For instance, there was that time stuck on Change Islands, off the coast of Newfoundland. It was blowing a gale, and the lops on the ocean were deadly white. We called the ferry service's 1-800 number every couple of hours to see if the boats were running. They were not. Once we resigned ourselves to the fact that we were not going anywhere, that we had another night in a safe place, cosied up to the woodstove, and that the proprietor of our B&B was not going to charge us for the second night—all was fine. Then there were those eighteen hours in Port-aux-Basques, NL. From the terminal you could see the ferry bobbing around outside the harbour, but plus-100-kilometre-an-hour winds prevented it from coming through the narrow opening in the breakwater. We made ourselves comfortable in the last hotel room in town; and could only imagine how the passengers on the boat were faring.

Newfoundland's Bernice Morgan recalls the 'immense effort' it took to get to her parents' home of Cape Island, an island in Bonavista Bay when she was a child: 'We didn't have a car [so] you went by train' (Morgan, 2012: n.p.). Remembering that journey decades later has taken on mythic proportions, so much so that Bernice calls it her 'ideal island'. Indeed, a combination of Cape Island and Random Island, her father's home island in Trinity Bay, became Cape Random, the setting for her novels, *Random Passage* and *Waiting for Time*.

At the same time, John Cameron observes, when the ferry closes down at night, he knows that who is on the island is on the island—for some, then, the island is a private haven, a closed loop.

By the time you've lived on Bruny Island for a while you've got the ferry schedule firmly engraved on your mind, particularly if you're aiming for the last ferry because if you miss that ferry you're not going to be on that island at all! Well, short of pinching somebody's rowboat.

Françoise Enguehard (2012: n.p.) of St Pierre et Miquelon echoes this sentiment:

When the boat had left and you had the great sense of being by yourselves, amongst your own, there was a great sense of security, safety, comfort, coziness. I remember we had the same vision that when the last ferry left, you knew you were just yourselves. And that feeling I remember as a little girl

having, that nobody could bother you. You were comfortable, that you were wrapped in your security blanket, so to speak. That's a marvelous feeling. It has its shortcomings. If you want anything and it's not on the island you have a bit of a problem. But you adapt to that.

2. Leaving home.

Mental list. Purse / wallet: check. Coat / hat / umbrella / sun screen [depending on the season]: check. To-do/shopping list(s): check. Sunglasses / mobile phone [if you have one; see above re. alarm clocks] / credit/debit card / cash: check. Turn off the lights / don't turn off the lights.

Fogo Island's Jack Stanley (2012: n.p.):

Paddy Barry [says to me], 'Jack, you can really tell that you and Vida aren't from here. Whenever you leave the island, you leave a light on in your house. Why do you do that? Nobody else does. Why would you waste the electricity?'

Lock the door/don't lock the door.

Fogo Island's Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.): 'We never lock our doors. Someone might need to borrow something'.

On Fogo Island, leave the mop leaned up against the door so everyone knows that there's nobody home. No visiting today.

3. The drive.

Like a bat out of hell. No one else on the road: clear sailing. Car in front of you going the speed limit or lower: do not pass (bad etiquette if you know the slowpoke is heading to the ferry, too, as it could be your neighbour / best friend / mother/father-in-law; imagine the embarrassment if you get on and he / she does not). Swear a bit / a lot.



Figure 4.4 – *No one home today*, photo by Paddy Barry
(used with permission of the photographer)

4. *The approach.*

*You spot the end of the line-up. Mental calculation: am I going to get on?
[Count cars / know yes or no by such-and-such a tree or a road sign or mark
on the pavement (and if you're on Gabriola Island, you'll know by the overflow
sign down the road and around the corner from the terminal and that if it's the
Quinsam running, you're good for another ten or so cars after that; but if it's
the smaller Bowen Queen running because the Quinsam is in retrofit, then you
know the sign is pretty much the limit]. You're on: feelings of relief [continue
on to 5.] You're not: feelings of despair [swear / make phone calls / reschedule
for later today / continue on to 5] [swear / turn around and go home / make
phone calls / reschedule for tomorrow/next week/next year/never].*

Bruny Island's John Cameron (2011: n.p.):

Life does simplify the instant you pull up in the ferry queue. Now there's nothing I have to do, except not drive away again. I stay in the ferry queue.

5. The line-up.

Seemingly a place that geographer Edward Relph would categorise 'incidental outsidership' ... for whom the places visited are of little importance in themselves' (1976: 52), ferry lineups may be ephemeral, but you make the lineup a dwelling in spite of its design (Vannini, 2012: 204). You imbue it with meaning. You stay in your car to [drink your coffee / eat breakfast/lunch/snack / do your hair / do your make-up / listen to the radio / read your newspaper/magazine/book / get caught up on e-mail on your hand-held (and thank the ferry gods for the Wi-Fi) / nap]. Or you get out of your car to [take the dog for a walk/pee / take your kids for a walk/pee / play Frisbee/catch / head to the terminal to use the loo/grab some breakfast/get a coffee / check out who else is in the line-up because invariably you'll know someone, so you (congregate in a pack with others who have gotten out of their cars to do the same / lean in and talk to someone who's rolled down the window when they see you / get in the passenger seat]. Very rarely do you [walk the beach / take a dip because most beaches are inaccessible because (of wharf and accompanying infrastructure are in the way / it's nasty because the water is polluted from the ferries / it's winter)]. Always you hope your car doesn't break down because [everyone will have to drive around you / they tow your car away] and you won't make it to your [doctor's/dentist's/hair appointment / concert / movie / play / class / grocery store / plane].

John Cameron (2011: n.p.):

I like to get to the ferry queue early. Pretty well when I pull up into the queue: out of the car. There's Jane and Len, that's great, so we'll have to catch up with them, haven't seen them for a while. Yadda yadda yadda, then up comes Ian, that's fantastic. So the crossing is very much a social event. Some of the loveliest social interactions are in the ferry queue. You get out of the car and you just don't know who you're going to come across. It's a nice sort of happenstance about it. That's a lovely part about being an islander.

For those for whom time is the most precious commodity, getting stuck in a line-up or on a ferry is a treat. Certainly some people spend the time on their iPhones or computers, continuing to be ‘productive’. But others actually talk with other people. Even I, a new and occasional visitor to Bruny Island, knew someone each time I took the ferry. The only time I remembered the BC ferries not running, we stayed up all night playing cards with complete strangers. We felt closer to these folks because we were sharing the experience. Says Andy Jones (2012: n.p.), ‘I guess it’s as simple as the fact that you do have to get on the water to get to the next place. It gets you feeling like a big family in a way’. In the morning, when the boat finally sailed, we said good-bye, knowing we’d never see them again. But I remember.

6. Boarding.

Depending on the type of boat, the ferry workers [and they’re mostly always men] direct you [down in the hold / up on a ramp / to the main level and the canyon between two lines of 18-wheelers]. A second guy [see above] directs you to within three inches of the car in front of you. You turn off the car. Mental list. Emergency brake: check. Lights: check. Keys: check. Book: check. Purse/wallet: check. Water bottle/travel mug with your coffee/tea: check. Keys again: check. Lock your door: check. Find your way to the stairs / elevator. Take the direct route to the stairs if your legs are less than three inches wide / walk up or down the rows until you spot an opening and follow the maze. Get your workout climbing the stairs. Hope you don’t hold up the people behind you.

7. Settling in.

You [get in the cafeteria line-up / find your favourite seat next to the window (if a tourist hasn’t taken it) / head out on deck / go to the loo.] Prepare to set sail. Jump out of your skin when the horn blasts in your ear. Feel the boat’s shudder. Feel disoriented as you see the dock move. Then realise it’s you.

8. The crossing.

Welcome to betweenness. You [eat / drink / watch the island disappear / fold up your coat against the window and nap/read a book/yesterday's newspaper/check e-mail on your hand-held (see above thank you, Wi-fi) / visit with friends/neighbours/tourists / do the crossword in yesterday's newspaper you find between the seats / play cards with friends/neighbours/tourists / watch TV / settle your stomach if feeling queasy by watching the horizon/going outside/ heading to the loo/lying on the floor) / go outside (walk the deck/take photos/ smoke/watch the whales/be the first to catch a glimpse of the mainland/watch it draw closer)]. Estimate how much longer, and if you have time to use the loo one last time. Heed the disembodied voice telling you it's time to disembark. Negotiate the steep stairs, the treads of which always seem to be too narrow for your foot, holding on to the railing for dear life. Hope you don't hold up the people behind you. Find your keys. Go up and down the lanes of cars, trying to remember where you parked yours; hope someone left five inches instead of three. Unlock your door; put away [purse/wallet/water bottle/book/travel mug]. Wait. Feel the car jiggle a bit as the ferry hits the dock. Wait some more. Have your hand on the key. Calculate the precise moment to turn on your ignition so you don't create too much exhaust / not hold anyone up. Pray the car starts. Watch the cars empty out in an order that makes sense only to the ferry guys (see above). Your turn. Drive off smoothly / get stopped on the incline and feel humiliated as everyone behind you has to back up so you can take another run at it. Drive off. Jockey for position.

Vannini (2012: 58) calls time spent travelling by boat 'a transformative "portal" of sorts ... a bit of a liminoid time and space ... crucial in shaping the experiences of island and coastal life and the identities of islanders and coasters, both as unique passengers and as dwellers of unique places'. Cresswell (2010: 17) defines mobility constellations as made up of 'experiences, practices, and politics which shape historically and geographically specific formations of mobility', singling out six aspects of mobility as 'sensitizing concepts for research: motives, speed, rhythm, route, feel, and friction'. Vannini (2012: 70) takes these and adds three new concepts appropriate to the crossing: 'remove, duration, and cost'. Here I am most interested in exploring one of those nine: feel.

What does the crossing feel like? What is so special about it? I have written before that it is time for yourself, when you have put one part of your day behind you and there is another part of your day ahead of you—but this in-between part represents a transition, a time when you can just be, a time-out from the busy-ness of the world, the weight of the omnipresent ‘to dos’ of your life. You are dependent on someone else to get you to where you’re going—you are not responsible for the traversing. Whatever happens is beyond your control.

Michaye Boulter (2012: n.p.) has eaten breakfast and changed nappies on the twenty-minute ferry ride to and from Bruny: as a mom you learn to use your time wisely. Others take short naps, awakening only when the ferry operator raps on the window, the nappers mortified to see that theirs is the only car left on the boat.

Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) compares the crossing to ‘stepping out of one world into another’, and has learned to appreciate the in-between time on a ferry or in an airplane as an ‘immensely introspective time’:

You stop the car and you’re on a boat for a period of time. Maybe after you’ve done it a million times and you’re there and you just open your newspaper; perhaps it’s like sitting at an extended traffic light. But for me, that crossing is where I have to stop and think. There’s that moment of what I think of as ‘present tense’ in a plane. You step on an aeroplane here, you get up into the sky, you can’t influence what’s behind you. You can’t influence what’s ahead of you. You’ve got that little capsule of hours, however many they might be. But for that period of time, you’re still. And I find those crossings, whether by boat or plane, I find them immensely introspective, leaving or arriving.

Newfoundlander Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.) remembers her first summer job, working on the ferry between Port-aux-Basques and Cape Breton, a crossing of six hours, ‘dressed up in my century ruffly dress. Fabulous, working for the Department of Tourism. It was a licence to talk to whoever I wanted, right?’.

Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) points out the obvious: when you are on a boat the danger is often not the sea, but the land. She calls that ‘middle time’ a ‘peaceful time’, where she felt safe ‘away from the land’. The longest trip without seeing land

was thirty days; mostly they were a week or ten days. Catching the first glimpse of the island can be quite exciting, as Boulter recalls:

You'd be straining to see: is it or isn't it? There was always that point where you never knew if it was land or whether it was cloud form, or what was on the horizon. I really like the feeling that that distant point can be anything: it could be cloud or sea or maybe it's land. You keep looking and looking so hard till you see it. There was a change of pace on the boat once you knew you were coming in to land. Everything had to change, you know, gear up, prepare the boat for it, get the things ready that you need ... for land.

Or it can be fear-inducing for other reasons, as Newfoundland writer John Steffler (2013: n.p.) remembers about his first trip to Newfoundland in May 1975, to teach English at Grenfell College in Corner Brook:

I can hardly put it into words. I remember my very first arrival by ferry. We left Toronto. The chestnut trees were in bloom, it was like that kind of pink popcorn, these candelabra of flowers were filling the street where we were living in Toronto. And we drove down to Newfoundland. Took the ferry from North Sydney. Got to Port-aux-Basques. And there was snow still. The CN ferry workers were on the end of the pier in parkas. There were no trees in sight. It's just rock there, and low tundra, practically. And I thought, what on earth are we heading into?

While living on the island, Steffler remembers with evocative imagery his years of ferry travel, 'sometimes twice a year or more', evidenced in the detail with which he describes his arrival at Port-aux-Basques, and the effect it has on his sense of belonging:

The truth is now when I go back I'm so full of—my heart is so torn by what I see. There's a little cemetery, in particular, on one of those knolls, humps, of slightly vegetation-covered rock that you go past as the ferry enters Port-aux-Basques. And then you see houses. There's a cemetery at the base of one of those boggy rocks where you can see people have been buried. I'm so moved by that, by the lives people have lived there. It's incredibly powerful. That

sense of people's lives that have been so hard and so full of courage and love, the history of their lives being retained so obviously again, just below the surface, or just on the surface of the place itself.

9. Head to town.

Stay in line until you can pass safely (don't worry about etiquette—there is none on the mainland). Calculate which ferry will get you home. Back-time it so you'll leave town early enough to catch it, with a bit of time to spare in case there's a line-up. Especially if it's the last ferry.

10. Get out your to-do list. (There's always a list.)

Check. Check. Check.

John Cameron (2011: n.p.):

You get onto the mainland, it's not, oh bummer, we're on the mainland, because there's things to be done. You're in that sort of mode, of things to be done. There is some sort of a tyranny—at least with the sort of island life we live, where we do our shopping over on the mainland, so when we do get over there, we've got a lot to do. You've got to be organised. And it's quite complex. You've got to do this and this and this, and go to such and such appointments. We've got to make sure we've got enough milk and enough bananas, and whatever because we like our milk and bananas and there's no corner store. It has consequences if you forget your bananas.

Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.):

When you live on Bruny Island you're either on-island or off-island. And when you're off-island you've got a list a mile long and you're then frantically running around.

Finish your [errands/appointments/shopping/class/meeting/concert]. Speed up as you approach the end of the list. Leave town [on time/late].

9. Drive to the ferry.

Like a bat out of hell, passing everyone in sight, until you're on the home stretch and you know there's nowhere else to go BUT the ferry, and still pass the slowpoke. There is no bad etiquette on the mainland. If you recognise the car you passed is your [next-door neighbour's/best friend's/mother/father-in-law's], wave innocently.

Fogo Island's Adam Young says he gets a 'sense of relief' when he arrives at the ferry terminal in Farewell, hoping for the direct crossing to Stag Harbour on Fogo Island, rather than the 'combined' route that stops on Change Islands first, and adds another twenty minutes to the crossing.

8. The approach.

As you round the last corner, look for the boat. Can you see it? If so, speed up. If not, you're almost golden. But then you have to calculate if there will be room for you. So you count cars. You know how many cars it takes. You know the spot. You know you're safe when you've passed it. Sigh with relief / curse.

7. The line-up.

John Cameron (2011: n.p.):

Interestingly, I've noticed that it's not so much of a social occasion being in the ferry queue to come across this way. I've noticed that the mainland crossing, when you're going back across—because everybody's been on the island for a while, whatever it is, even if it's just been overnight, you're in a different head space than when you've come off. When you come from Hobart, whatever you've been doing during the day, or whether you've been off-island for a couple of days, you've got the head full of mainland busy-ness. So what you want to do is, ah!, just sit, relax, that's great. So you're not so much in a social space. So that's quite different from when you drive this way.

6. Board.

Repeat 6 above.

5. Settle.

Find your favourite seat. Hope no one has taken it.

4. The crossing.

Tune out. Rehash your day in your head. Think about what's for supper. Nap.

John Cameron (2011: n.p.) calls heading back to the island a 'visceral' experience:

To get on the ferry, and the ferry starts to take off and grumbles and then you're out on the water. I mean I love to get out of the car, unless it's absolutely foul, I get out of the car and lean over the side, see whether you can see a seal or a dophin or whatever. There's the smell of it. Particularly if you've been in Hobart. Compared with this, the air is very different. So the crossing—that sort of physical part of it, when you're actually on the ferry, going across the water—I find it's really quite psychologically significant. And I notice myself getting into a different space. And driving away on the other side, wow, it's great to be back on the island. It's really fantastic.

Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) feels a settling-in, as she returns:

So you feel like you go back to the way you live when you get on the ferry. It's always—ha!—a sense of relief, somehow. Or just looking out a bit, I'm moving from one island to another.

There are many reasons why people are attracted to the idea of water and crossing that are beyond just the intellectual. Just as the edge demarcating land and sea is a powerful threshold, so, too, are the edges of human life: birth and death. Making a watery crossing at the beginning of life is described by Richard Flanagan (1994: 1–2). in his novel *Death of a River Guide* as his main character is born. From 'swimming 'within a milky blue sac of amniotic fluid' to being

exiled from my imperfect circle, itself just exited from its own enclosing circle, Mama's womb ... the roof and floor of my world worked ceaselessly from that time onward, the power of each movement more powerful than the previous, like a tidal wave gathering size as it skips over each new reef ... allowing myself to be battered up against the narrow walls of the birth canal ...

The crossing as symbolic of other ‘life crossings’ is evident to John Cameron (2011: n.p.), too:

I’ve been talking in terms of how I experience it in a daily sense, but crossing is very important metaphorically, and psychically as well, and the crossings to me run all the way down into that final crossing we’re going to make across the River Styx when we die. And the crossings that we make when, say, we enter into a relationship and marry, or have a child. All of those things can be thought of as a journey across the waters.

Philosopher Jeff Malpas (2010: n.p.) echoes this, calling the crossing a place of ‘transition’ similar to those of life cycle:

Water is an otherworldly element. It’s that element that one crosses to reach another realm, it’s that element that supports life and it is a realm of its own. And it’s completely different to terrestrial environment. On the island you have a place of habitation at the same time that’s set off in the midst of the otherworldly, and to get to which you have to achieve a transition. The transition between birth and death, between life and death—between all of those important human transitions.

Poet Don McKay (2012, n.p.) connects the word ‘metaphor’ with ‘ferry’, calling them ‘close cousins’. As a result, he says he never finds ferry crossings mundane:

Metaphor has ferry in it, ‘pherrine’, metaphor: carries across. So this one anticipates giving one’s life over to the life of ferries—F-E-R-R-Y. [Latin: *metaphora*, ‘carrying over’]. I’ve never actually become bored with or inured to, or had that feeling that ferries were mundane. I’ve always had that sense of ferry as a crossing, in which some change might mysteriously occur.

McKay notes that Hermes is the god of crossings (with you on ferries), the god of thieves, and of boundaries and transitions.

And death: the final transition, the watery crossing over the River Styx to the mythical, mystical Avalon. Crossing that divide from life to death, as in Tennyson’s

poem, written in 1889, ‘Crossing the bar’: ‘When I put out to sea ... I hope to see my Pilot face to face / When I have crost the bar’.

Obey disembodied voice; hold tightly to the railing down those too-narrow treads; find car; find keys; feel the (mostly) gentle bump as you nudge up against the island. Hope the ferry guy chooses your line first. Pray that the car starts. Pray that you don't get stopped going up the ramp.

3. Drive home.

Like you have all the time in the world. Island time.

2. Arrive.

Lug in your purchases; put away the milk and the bananas.

1. Home.

Put up your feet. Sigh. Your trip to the mainland just a fold in the paper, a wrinkle in time.

4.3 The practical side

*from ‘When you come in late to an island’
(for Adam Young)*

*When you first come in to the island you think
oh god you're in Gander
got an hour-and-a-half drive to the ferry in Farewell then
got an hour ride on the ferry to Stag Harbour
(and you hope it's not combined)
and then you get to Fogo Island and you go
gotta drive gotta drive gotta drive*

...
*But three years in on this island
you don't think about time anymore*

...
*a calming comes over you
as you drive to the ferry
and you cross on the ferry
and you're home safe
in the net of your ocean*

In direct contrast to waiting and travel being a gift of time, Vannini knows ferries can be ‘time thieves’ (echoing Hermes, the god of thieves). He quotes one of his informants (2012, 194): ‘a small island is like a prison. The ferry is the warden and the sneakiest thief in town ... It forces you to stay there in a lineup and wait, while it steals your time and chance to access freely the rest of the world’. Geographer Tom Mels (2004: 3) calls people ‘rhythm-makers as much as place-makers’; Vannini (2012: 115) places this in context:

Ferries and their schedules make places through a combination of institutionally inscribed and locally organised rhythms (timetables are set from the BC Ferries Corporation in negotiation, at least ideally, with local advisory committees). The negotiation of these rhythms intersects with the natural alternation of diurnal, weekly, and seasonal rhythms, inevitably clashing and/or harmonizing with different people’s habits, routines, and rituals—producing degrees of regularity in places’ way of life.

He adds, ‘people have incorporated travel so meaningfully into their habitual routines that moving around has become a form of art for them’ (162). John Cameron agrees (2011: n.p.) that the ferry schedule becomes ‘firmly engraved on your mind’, while noting the above-mentioned ‘clash’ if ‘you’re aiming for the last ferry because if you miss that ferry you’re not going to be on that island at all! Well, short of pinching somebody’s rowboat’.

Of course, if there is a murderer with you on the island (such as in Dennis Lehane’s novel *Shutter Island* or the television series *Lost*), you are well aware that he or she cannot leave either.

Fogo Islanders joke about how they can tell when people are new to Fogo Island because they lock their vehicle doors. On Fogo Island, everyone leaves the keys in their vehicles in case someone needs to move it or borrow it in a hurry. If someone were going to steal the car, where would they go? Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.) explains:

Nobody can steal my snow machine or whatever. What are they gonna do with it? They’ve got to go on the ferry, and the first thing I’d say the next morning,

did you see—like you know my machine, eh? Yeah, that was on the back of the truck ... I shouldn't say it, but we never lock our door. We go away for weeks not locking anything up. People say what about your shed, you've got all kinds of tools in there. Why don't you lock it? Well, people might want something. That's the way it's always been.

And then there are the medical emergencies in which you have to get off the island to get to hospital, or you are running out of food, not getting your mail delivered, not getting a part you need to fix something. Take, for example, Fogo Island. For several days in March 2013, ice kept the ferry tied up in Cape Farewell, on the mainland. The province offered emergency helicopter service if it was needed, but then it became too foggy to fly. The school had to close because they could not get a part they needed to fix the water or heating supply. People complained about the inconvenience, but they survived—all tougher—and more close-knit—for it.

How much people complain about the ferries seems in direct correlation to the size of the island. On the island of Newfoundland, no one I interviewed commented on the Marine Atlantic ferry service, even though the boats are tied up at the docks several times a year because of weather or mechanical problems. Similarly, none of my Tasmanian participants commented on ferry or air service to mainland Australia—beyond the expense; most say it is cheaper to fly (further explored in s. 4.5). In contrast, my Fogo Island participants had much more to say about the provincially run service, and for years have lobbied government for a new ferry with proper ice-breaking capabilities. Having a ferry out of service for a few days is much more keenly felt on the smaller island, where there are fewer amenities for groceries and other necessities than you find on a larger island. Because of its size, the community is also more close-knit, allowing for a strengthened voice because it is a more keenly felt shared experience. However, lobby efforts have paid off: in November 2013 the Newfoundland and Labrador government announced that a new ferry was on the drawing board, to be put in service in September 2015, replacing 'the aging and oft-broken' *Captain Earl W. Winsor*, which was currently in for repairs (CBC, 2013c: n.p.).

In keeping with the tropes of connection and isolation, islanders have a love-hate relationship with the ferries that connect them to the outside world—or, rather, with the government or corporate bodies that run the ferry services. Even though they have chosen to be isolated, they still want—and need—to be connected. As Vannini (2012: 73) says, ‘this is why ferries tend to be both loved and hated: because they embody the struggle between connectedness and separation, between insulation and isolation’:

Mobility constellations of ferry-dependent communities, I argue, are marked by two characteristics in particular: *insulation* and *isolation*. These characteristics are the hallmark of their *islandness*. Living on real islands or de facto islands (such as coastal communities only accessible by boat) presents residents and visitors alike with unique constraints and possibilities. Islandness affords positive distinction and uniqueness, but at the same time can be the source of political, economic, and lifestyle challenges. Ferry boats play a key role both in symbolizing and in actually making possible such insulation and isolation—and is one of the reasons why so many people who depend on them say they have a ‘love/hate relationship’ with them (71).

Vannini (2012: 73) believes that ferries are more than just a means of transport. They are a ‘symbol of their relationship with one another, a mark of their distinction from the rest of the continent, and a tool that has allowed them to carve alternative lifestyles and distinct places’. And, as we will discuss in subsequent chapters, islands are, indeed, distinct places that are conducive to alternate lifestyles, particularly for artists.

Ferry crossings are not without their mishaps, of course. Ferries and boats sink, and people die, including the MS *Estonia* in 1994, sailing from Tallinn, Estonia, to Stockholm, Sweden, claiming 852 lives, and most recently, in April 2014, the ferry, the MV *Sewol*, filled with schoolchildren on a class trip to Jeju Island, South Korea, which sank, killing over 300. The most recent Canadian ferry disaster was the MV *Queen of the North*, which sailed between Prince Rupert, BC, and Port Hardy, on Vancouver Island. On 22nd March 2006, she ran aground on one of the islands of British Columbia’s Inside Passage, resulting in two deaths. As recently as March

2013, two people on opposite sides of Canada drove onto a ferry and off the other end (Gabriola Island, BC, 20th March 2013, and the Englishtown ferry on Cape Breton Island 25th March 2013) (CBC, 2013a; CBC, 2013b), resulting in their deaths; one was a suspected suicide. It is easy to take ferry workers who guide passengers on and off the boat for granted, or to become inured to the lifeboats hanging on either side of a ferry, or the announcements about life jackets found under the seat: reminders, if you care to listen, that travelling by sea is always a risk.

Taking it to the extreme is to be shipwrecked on an island, which, with GPS and other navigational technology, we rarely hear about today. But the idea has spawned Robinsonades (Van Duzer, 2006), a genre of literature inspired by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and 'castaway narratives' (Barberet, 2005: 111) going back to Homer's *The Odyssey*. In the early days of sail, nearby residents would create and stock shelters with food, water, and firewood; or stock some of the outlier islands with birds. Stories of these islands haunted by shipwrecked sailors who then perished—complete with mysterious lights, clanking and shrieking of boats being torn apart, and hoarse cries for help—are the stuff of myth and legend. For example, in Frank Parker Day's novel, *Rockbound* ([1928] 1989: 104), Barren Island is thought to be haunted:

The island was an eerie place, for one heard naught by day or night but the tiresome beat of surf, the moan of the sea wind, and the shrill screams of gulls and careys. Though David was an agnostic in regard to ghosts, he could not deny that there was something queer and unearthly about Barren Island. Even the government engineer—so ran the tale—who had built the light's foundation, had reported to the islanders that things were not as they should be. As the friends stepped out of the lighthouse one blowy night soon after their arrival, to make the round of the cliffs, Gershom gripped David's arms and said: 'Listen!' From the northern end a hoarse, distant voice seemed to cry: 'Help! Ahoy, there, ahoy!' and from below the cliff wall came sounds like the rattling of oars and the banging of a shattered boat, but when they reached the cliff's edge they could see or hear nothing. After nightfall they kept close together, for they both knew that the old man's haunt would linger about the island for a little while.

For many a mariner, islands have been regarded as danger. The nickname ‘Graveyard of the Atlantic’, given to the barrier islands off Virginia and North Carolina and to Sable Island, where the Labrador and Gulf Currents collide, has been aptly bestowed, with over a thousand shipwrecks recorded on these islands since the 1500s. The ‘Graveyard of the Pacific’ is home to shipwrecks numbering in the thousands; similarly, the area along the Oregon and Washington coasts, up to and including Vancouver Island, is particularly treacherous with fog, wind, and storms driving ships onto the rocks. The Bass Strait, separating the northern coast of Tasmania from southern Victoria on mainland Australia, has come to be dubbed the Bass Strait Triangle (after the Bermuda Triangle) due to the disappearances of perhaps a hundred ships (and several aircraft; see, for example, Loney, 1980).²⁸ The Strait’s relatively shallow water, westerly winds, and tidal flows create high waves of short length, creating treacherous conditions. Australia’s most disastrous shipwreck was the sinking of the English immigrant ship, the three-masted barque, *The Cataraqui*, off King Island in 1845, killing 400 (Lemon & Morgan, 1986; Parks and Wildlife Service, 2008). Though its velocity was a boon to travellers in the age of sail, the ‘Roaring Forties’—a strong west-to-east wind current that occurs in the Southern Hemisphere between 40 and 50 degrees latitude—also caused numerous shipwrecks off Tasmania’s shores.

4.4 *The psychology of boats*

*from ‘My island’s the house I sleep in at night’
(for Zita Cobb)*

*You didn’t know it at 16
that the boat you sailed
would become your house, your island.
Every inch of it, I knew it well.
Through every storm in every night at sea
you depended on it.
When you attach that deeply
to a boat, to an island,*

²⁸ Although most of the area’s maritime disasters have not been associated with the paranormal, the mystery surrounding the disappearance of aviator Frederick Valentich in 1978, which was attributed by some to UFOs, led to the sobriquet.

your capacities as human beings
 come awake.
 When you move away from the edge,
 whether it's the boat, the island, the bigger island,
 and finally you're in Toronto,
 how do you know who you are?

Boats have been an integral part of human history. From the Ark to the *Titanic*, from HMS *Bounty* to the *Costa Concordia*, boats symbolise survival and death, war and peace, exploration and exploitation, recreation and transport, luxury and work, technological genius and human folly. Indeed, just as Mark Kurlansky has written the history of the world through salt—*Salt: A World History*—and cod—*Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World*—one could trace human history by following the humble boat. And to an island, boats—from the smallest rafts, kayaks, and canoes to the largest of aircraft carriers, car ferries, and luxury cruise ships—serve as lifelines to the rest of the world.

At least four of my informants have spent good portions of their lives on boats. As a child, Tasmania's Danielle Wood spent all her family holidays on her grandfather's forty-foot Huon pine yacht plying the waters around Bruny Island (2011: n.p.):

Mom would play house, knit. My grandfather would run the boat and have a sleep in the afternoon, and we would catch flathead. My dad and I would play hangman on the beach, we'd go fishing in the dinghy ... We weren't really on the sea ... you're in a bay, or you're in a channel ... so it's like being on a road. But you've got this added element of the water, but you're not far from anything ... There was very little sense of risk ... I think my mother and I trusted him so implicitly that I didn't ever feel any danger, or even a heightened sense of adventure. It wasn't really like that. It was like going to your shack. It was a floating shack.

The idea of cosiness resonates in Adrienne Eberhard's words, too, particularly in relation to coracles—a concept she explores in three poems, 'Coracle', 'Coastlines', and 'Stone Boat' (2003: 82–87). In 'Coracles', she writes, 'Islands are coracles are memories / are sand and stone ... grey petals of sky / come folding, fading / forming concavities; / an archipelago of silence'. About the poem, she says (2011: n.p.):

I was working with a sculptor, and he had actually made coracles. The minute I saw his photographs of these coracles, they really spoke to me. Whether it goes back to those Celtic origins—and again those are islands—the coracles really spoke to me at a mythic level. The coracle is like an island, it's self-contained, and it's round—it's not a canoe, it's the coracle. They're beautiful, and woven. And there's that kind of mythic thing about the idea of a child being kept safe in a coracle, that idea of Jesus in his—I don't know where it comes from, but there was a very strong recognition in me about the coracle, and it was a way of exploring that notion of island. Being at home in the island, just as you are safe, a child is protected in a coracle. Safe is not the right word. Sanctuary is a better word.

Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.), who grew up on a thirty-two-foot boat, echoes Eberhard and Wood when she says her bed was like a 'little tunnel. You had to slip into it. I called it my bed room. It was actually a coffin! Little kids love getting into little small spaces and tunnels, and intimate sort of things'.

Before returning to Fogo Island to begin her work with the Shorefast Foundation, Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) spent four years sailing the world. She compares the attachment she feels to her boat to that of her island, and how she knows herself so much better when she is firmly attached to a place that she knows intimately:

If you spend a lot of time on a particular boat, if you cross an ocean on a boat, you develop feelings for that boat that are probably not normal. Like, I really *love* that boat. Every inch of it, I know it well. Through every storm in every night at sea, you depend on it.

She compares the island of Newfoundland to a boat, perhaps because of the island's first settlement patterns around the coast:

I used to be very preoccupied as a kid with 'what if we sink?' I think it's Wadham's Journal, he said that Newfoundlanders regard the land as nothing more than a conveniently anchored ship. I always felt the islandness all the time.

Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.) agrees: ‘Some people feel that this island was supposed to be like a boat, you get off it and go back to England after the fishery is over’.

However, people stayed, fished, built lives, built boats.

Conversely, says Prince Edward Island’s David Weale (2012: n.p.): ‘When you’re on a little boat in the middle of an ocean, that’s your tiny island’: bounded and self-sufficient, yet connected, too.

The tradition of boat-building goes deep to the heart of Newfoundland and Fogo Island identity. Says Cobb (2012: n.p.), ‘my brother says we are eight funerals away from ever being able to build a boat’. In order to keep the tradition alive, Cobb’s Shorefast Foundation has sponsored boat-building classes in the local school, and offers microloans loans to boat-builders. A natural offshoot is the (mostly) friendly Great Fogo Island Punt Race From There and Back, held annually since 2007 between Change and Fogo Islands. Teams from Fogo and Change Islands, along with people come from other parts of Canada and the United States, row hand-built wooden punts eleven kilometres over open ocean, a symbol of the long-standing rivalry between the two islands. A race organiser from 2013, Colleen Higgins (in Wells, 2013: n.p.), says: ‘It is a piece of our heritage that shows the ingenuity that our great, great, great-grandfathers had. They were kind of like the punt, like tough little boats’. In 2010, the race received a provincial Historic Sites Award for excellence in recognition of ‘the individuals on Fogo Island and Change Islands who have given their time, love, imagination and hard work to bringing back the punts and the joy & depth they add to our lives’ (Fogo Island Regatta, 2012: n.p)

Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.), Newfoundland and Labrador’s Officer of Intangible Cultural Heritage, is well aware of the importance of boats to Newfoundland’s cultural tourism, as well as to Newfoundland industry. He notes the work of the provincial wooden boat museum in the community of Winterton, where they:

want to revive this tradition, or keep this tradition of boat-building alive, and so they want to build boats. And if they are going to build boats, they have to be able to sell boats. And there is a market, a small market, but there is a market, for people who want a hand-made wooden boat. So that is a commodity. But boat-builders traditionally have always been in the commodities business. They

build things and sell them. That's what boat-builders do for a living. So if we can continue that tradition and help them find and develop new markets, and they might have to modify designs slightly in order to fit a market. If that keeps that tradition alive and viable in some ways, that's a good thing.

Tasmania has a similar reverence for wooden boats, hosting MyState Australian Wooden Boat Festival since 1994. The biennial festival, which in 2013 drew a record 550 boats and 200,000 people internationally, 'celebrates the unique maritime heritage of Tasmania and the world-wide community of those who value the craftsmanship and beauty of lovely craft' (Australian Wooden Boat Festival, n.d.: n.p.). The Wooden Boat School in the town of Franklin, on the Huon River forty minutes from Hobart, has taught the craft of building wooden boats since 1990, and bills itself as 'a fully nationally-accredited Certificate course which is the only one actively operating in Australia, probably the southern hemisphere, and possibly the world' (woodenboatcentre.com). That both islands have chosen to establish boat-building schools, creating an art form out of something that was once an industry,²⁹ is symbolic of the ways in which Newfoundlanders and Tasmanians look to the past in order to renew and revitalise their economies. At the same time, changes in technology, islanders' mobility options, and how they choose to spend their time travelling add to the potency of the wooden boat as symbolic of adaptation and change on these islands.

4.5 Other modes of crossing

Perhaps the greatest change in mobility to and from islands has come from air travel. With air travel more affordable and accessible than it was in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, and travel time cut substantially, most people, where there is an option, choose to fly rather than travel by boat. Indeed, for some islands, air

²⁹ For example, Prince Edward Island's thriving economy in the nineteenth century was based on shipbuilding, reinforcing its independence as an island and allowing the tiny colony to remain separate from Confederation until 1873 when a dying shipbuilding industry and increased railway debt forced it into bankruptcy (Brinklow and Hay, 2010; MacDonald, 2000).

travel is often the main option. For instance, in Newfoundland and Tasmania there are more flights available on a daily basis than there are ferry crossings; if you miss the plane you can generally be assured that there is another flight a few hours later. Travelling to and from Newfoundland and Tasmania via ferry is also generally more expensive and certainly more time-consuming than it is to fly. No longer are islands accessible only to the elite; instead, as prices have lowered and package deals to island vacation resorts have been made affordable to the middle-class, a democratization of sorts has occurred. As long as you can afford the plane ticket, then, you can visit almost any island of your choice.³⁰

Just how air travel has changed people's perception of islands and islandness is important to our discussion of travelling to and from islands. Gillian Beer (1990) addresses the topic when she asks: What has become of England's 'island story' since the coming of the aeroplane? How has air travel affected people's sense of islandness, when, after all, 'the island's identity depends on water' (279)? Beer examines these questions through the lens of author Virginia Woolf's portrayal of England and its offshore islands in several of her novels, particularly in the events surrounding the First World War when aeroplanes changed the way in which wars were fought. For Woolf, the island of England was no longer a 'safe fortress', but had become 'violable' (Beer, 1990: 273). As Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2012) suggests: 'While some have argued that the development of the twentieth-century aerial view could lead to a new transnational consciousness and to the blurring of the boundaries between nations, Gillian Beer points out that the aerial view of an island reinscribes the concept of boundedness'. This idea of 'boundedness' can be found in Beer's (1990: 265) interpretation of Gertrude Stein's comments from 1938 about how the earth has been changed through air travel:

³⁰ The idea of open access is easily challenged, however, since not everyone can afford to purchase a plane ticket, or even have access to one. Mimi Sheller (2012) discusses 'mobility justice' (195) in the island of Haiti, where the devastating 2000 earthquake exacerbated the power imbalance; aid workers could come and go, but locals were, for the most part, subjected to an "'islanding effect" of the isolation experienced due to uneven access to mobility' (188); and unequal access to the view of Haiti from the air, limiting 'certain kinds of visual power through the aerial gaze' (195).

a reordering which does away with centrality and very largely with borders. It is an ordering at the opposite extreme from that of the island, in which centrality is emphasized and the enclosure of land within surrounding shores is the controlling meaning.

That the concept of boundedness is still central to the way we perceive islands from above is reassuring. But when we travel by plane to an island, how we think about the island may be different to when we travel by boat. Even while the fascination with and anticipation of the island destination may be similar when travelling by air or boat (Baum 1997: 21), when we fly we no longer experience the sensate qualities of travelling by boat: the ferry line-up, the smells and sounds and feeling of travelling over water, the time spent on the boat, the disembarking. When we fly, we arrive at an airport, get on a plane, fly for a fixed amount of time in a sealed tube, then get off the plane; in the end, the actual experience of flying to an island is equivalent to flying anywhere, including a mainland destination. Beyond the flight attendant reminding us that there is a life vest under your seat and showing us how to put it on (which most of us recognise as futile), you can mostly ignore the fact that you are travelling over water.

However, when flying to an island, we can take advantage of the ‘panopticism’ (Sheller, 2012: 195) that arises from having a ‘pilot’s eye narrative distance’ (Beer, 1990: 267) or the ‘Apollonian eye’ (Cosgrove, 2001: 2), ‘a gaze [so-named after the photographs of Earth taken from the Apollo space mission in 1969–71] that is ‘synoptic and omniscient, intellectually detached’ (DeLoughrey 2012: 174). No longer do we see the island on a level horizontal plane, but we view it from above; we have ‘reordered the axes of experience’ (Beer, 1990: 269), often resulting in a greater geographic understanding of the island as we can see all of it (depending on its size, and our elevation, of course). The view is similar to those who are compelled to climb to the highest point when they travel to an island, to see with their own eyes that they are entirely surrounded by water. Indeed, for some it is part of their definition of an island: if you cannot see the edges, how do you really know that you are on an island? For others, it provides a sense of I-am-master-of-all-that-I-see—similar to the Robinson Crusoe story.

Phenomenologically, the experience of travelling by air is, on the whole, less rich than is travelling by boat. Even in small island airports, there are generally more stringent security measures in place when travelling by air; on a boat or ferry you are not usually subjected to the full range of screening intrusions. When flying, you must time your arrival at the airport quite some time before the flight departs; when travelling by ferry to and from some islands, generally you *should* arrive early, but there are still some instances where the ferry operators offer some leeway (such as letting you on as you drive up at the last minute).

Planes are fast and ferries are slow, allowing you to travel at a human pace, giving you time to adjust to a new place. Writer Susan Musgrave (2013: n.p.), from Haida Gwaii on Canada's west coast, says that when she flies she feels as if she has left her spirit behind. She prefers the ferry to an airplane: 'It's slower, so my spirit can catch up'. The 'crossing time' prepares you for 'island time', by letting you experience the space between, breathing that distinctively moist fresh air that comes from sailing over water. The crossing time allows you to experience the excitement and anticipation of arriving on an island, and from the vantage point of the boat we often feel more in touch with the island from the very first glimpse. We feel a connection to the ocean, the waves, the merging between beach and salt water, and to the landscape when our wheels or our feet touch the island for the first time. The tangy smell of salt air combined with travelling to an island (or leaving one) inform one another in our consciousness. We end up associating one with the other, which leaves an indelible imprint on our memory. This can be bad if it is a particularly rough crossing. Or it can be good, especially on a hot summer afternoon when you can head to the upper deck to bask in the sun, and pretend you are on a Caribbean cruise.

There are other modes of crossing to an island besides air or boat; for instance, by bridge, causeway, and tunnel (discussed earlier). In recent decades, many islanders have lost their connection to boats; in some places they are more a luxury than a utility. And then, of course, there are the technologies that render travel unnecessary. Doug House (2012: n.p.) sees the role the Internet has played in changing Newfoundlanders' sense of isolation:

You don't have that same isolation of being on an island that you once did. There are Newfoundland families now who are in constant contact, some of them living here and some of them living in Fort McMurray. It's almost that this geographical distance isn't quite the distance it once was. All this travel back and forth by air, going on Skype.

Through travel and the Internet, the world has been reordered, made smaller; yet still the island persists, the 'distinctiveness that a passage of water ensures' (Baum, 1997: 21).

I have known many water crossings to and from islands, where I relinquish control and just appreciate the in-between time when I entrust my movement to someone and something else. But, as I realise now, the majority of those crossings have been on government-run, government-inspected ferries. A trip in the Galapagos Islands was a decidedly less romantic version of 'the crossing': 'The Crossing from Hell' can be found in Appendix D.

4.6 *Concluding thoughts*

Appreciating them for what they represent—anywhere from harvesting food to leisure to transportation to being a tool of one's livelihood—boats and ferry crossings are deeply entrenched in and entwined with island living. And even as air travel to islands becomes more affordable and pervasive, boats and crossings continue to be part of what makes islands exotic, slowing down the crossing to human time, and allowing, as Susan Musgrave says, the 'spirit to catch up'.

Water surrounds, but is at the heart, too. Like the ecotone between land and sea, the physical geography of islands blurs into the psychological effects of islands on humans. The next section turns inward, delving into the effects of islands on the human psyche, and explores how artists use their physical state to delve into the depths of their psyches for inspiration.

Chapter 5 ‘Thank God we’re surrounded by water’: The psychology of islandness

*The sea, oh the sea, the wonderful sea,
Long may she roll between people and me* (Cahill in Tucker, 2010: n.p.).

Summing up many attitudes to living on an island are the lyrics of this popular Newfoundland folksong by Tom Cahill,³¹ ‘Thank God we’re surrounded by water’ (Tucker, 2010: n.p.). The song, in plain language, pays homage to the sea. But, perhaps more importantly, the lyrics valorize separation: a physical and psychological separation from the mainland and all it represents. As Newfoundland’s Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) says, ‘Thank God we’re an island means we’re not going to be affected by the vices of the mainland’. The lyrics are emblematic of a ‘divinely ordained sovereignty and unity ... [that] enshrine the inevitability of self-possession and self-determination’ (McCusker & Soares, 2011: xii).

Baglole and Weale (1973: 105–6) echo these sentiments about islands as a divine ‘act of God’ when they describe Prince Edward Island:

The Northumberland Strait has always been nature’s emphatic and unambiguous way of telling Islanders that they are a separate and unique people ... Living on the Island, then, involved a vivid and precise recognition of exactly where you were—and where you were not. Year in and year out, generation after generation, this singular geographic situation dictated both a sense of unity and separateness, of inclusion and exclusion.

Defining oneself by what one is *not* is commonplace. Just as the ocean is a stark reminder to mainlanders that you are neither inland or on an island, the ocean reminds islanders that you are *not* the mainland. Says Crummey (2012: n.p.): ‘There is this thing that was us, and everything else is something else, something very

³¹ The lyrics also appear in the song, ‘The Sea around us’, by Ireland’s Dominic Behan (McCusker & Soares, 2011: xii). As McCusker and Soares point out, they also ‘perhaps parody a certain strain of Irish nationalist nostalgia’.

different from us’. Yet, in direct contrast to this ideal state of being set apart from the main is John Donne’s more famous *Meditation XVII* from the year 1624: ‘No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main’, in which the poet argues that we are all part of one whole, and that ‘any man’s death diminishes me’. While citing this meditation, we tend to overlook Donne’s final lines: ‘And therefore never send to know for whom/the bell tolls; it tolls for thee’, which represent death as the ultimate isolation—or, perhaps, the ultimate reconnection. As with many of humankind’s great truths, then, both are accurate: ‘islandness’ is about the tropes of boundedness *and* connectedness, prison *and* paradise, insularity *and* resilience—along with a complex spectrum in-between.

That ‘singular geographic situation’, and the feelings of islandness that result, are seen by many to be different, exotic. Although they are not always able to articulate it, most islanders know in their bones that life on an island is different. Michael Crummey (2004: 20) calls this instinctual feeling an ‘inexorable gravitational pull ... elusive, ephemeral, and barely definable when we try to say exactly what it is and how it shapes us’. He notes that his friend, writer Lisa Moore, just calls it ‘this *Newfoundland thing*’. Recent Newfoundland import, writer Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.), calls this ‘*thing*’ an ‘imponderable. I think I can talk and talk and talk about this and never feel like I’ve got the reason that this is the place for me’. That ‘imponderable’ is why people choose to move to islands, or stay on their islands, despite all odds. Or, if they are forced by circumstances to leave, they will recreate ‘home’, creating and frequenting such establishments as ‘islander clubs’. They make sure that each and every vacation involves a trip home; and some spend their lifetimes trying to get back.

That ‘*thing*’ has been something sought for millennia: indeed, the allure of islands goes back to ancient times. ‘The importance of islands’, writes geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1974: 118), ‘lies in the imaginative realm. Many of the world’s cosmogonies, we have seen, begin with the watery chaos: land, when it appears, is necessarily an island’. The ‘island drive’ endures as islands continue to be regarded as exotic, otherworldly, *the* place to ‘get away from it all’. While tropical islands lure people to their shores for the sun, sand, and sea, temperate islands are attractive for their perceived isolation and pared-down lifestyle. It is not difficult to find suburban

refugees—including artists—who choose to escape twenty-first century chaos to make lives for themselves on an island.³²

The physical journey to an island may mirror the psychological if as Tuan (1971: 181) says, geography is ‘a mirror for man [sic]’—an observation further described by Relph (1976: 4) as ‘reflecting and revealing human nature and seeking order and meaning in the experiences that we have of the world’. Islands are thus a mirror with an emphatic frame, with boundedness accentuating the experience and intensifying their perceived unity (Brinklow, forthcoming 2014: n.p.). Cape Breton Island writer Alistair MacLeod (Brinklow et al, 2000: 19) calls it ‘the “intensity” of life on islands’ while Godfrey Baldacchino (Brinklow et al, 2000: 19; Brinklow, 2013: A15) refers to it as ‘the ABCs of island living: Articulation By Compression’. I would like to add ‘distillation of experience’ to the mix, life pared down to the essentials—whether these distilled experiences are noted and cherished by those who practice mindfulness, or glossed over as just another part of mundane existence by those who do not.

For many, to be surrounded by water is a blessed state: they find comfort and safety within a defined edge. They like the fact that they must make a deliberate choice to cross to and from an island, and, because they know precisely where, as Weale says, they are *not*, their identity as an islander is distinct from ‘the other’—usually a mainland or a larger, politically and/or culturally dominant island. Those who have relative ease of access to nature on islands have the possibility of living in tune with the rhythms of the ocean and land. Those born on an island may have had the island imprinted on them at an early age; and, because islands are ‘graspable, able to be held in the mind’s eye’ (Edmond & Smith, 2004: 2), they carry their homes with

³² For instance, statistics show that the ‘AIC’ postal code of St John’s, on the island of Newfoundland, has an artistic concentration four times higher than that of the rest of Canada, and the second densest concentration of artists in Atlantic Canada (Lepawsky et al, 2010: 332). Tasmania’s tourism website markets its island thus: ‘While we have less than three per cent of Australia’s population, we are home to nine per cent of its artists’ (Discover Tasmania).

them, in their heads and hearts, wherever they go. Others who have chosen to live (and make art) on an island often have to learn and ‘earn’ their islandness (Conkling, 2007: 198), and some of those, ‘like all converts, burn with a harder flame for island institutions and values than does the natal experience’ (Putz, 1984: 26).

By examining how life on an island affects artists, through interviews and engagement with their art, I explore in this chapter the psychology of islandness. Or, borrowing from island biogeography a term whereby ‘some aspects common to islands result in shared evolutionary forces on islands the world over’ (Berry, 2007: 168), I consider ‘the island effect’ (Baldacchino, 2007b: 2): those shared traits of islandness that affect humans who inhabit islands. I examine how being surrounded by water has a direct and profound influence upon those who live on islands. Whether people perceive themselves as being cut off and isolated or part of the main; whether they are hemmed in and stifled or safe and cocooned; whether they see island living as close-minded and insular or perfectly suited for their circumstances at the time; whether they find the omnipresent sea overwhelming or comforting; whether they succumb to the vulnerability of island living or are able to adapt with relative ease to whatever adversity is thrown their way or to influences from outside, are all part of the continuum of the island effect. This psychology of islandness plays out in many more island tropes: leaving and staying, coming home, childhood imprinting, deep connection with place, and a strong island identity, to name just a few. Indeed, for some islanders, these feelings are so commonplace that they hardly need to be articulated. Writes David Platt (2004: 1):

Islandness is a construct of the mind, a singular way of looking at the world. Articulating this perspective is perhaps more important to outsiders who for some reason associate themselves with islands than it is to islanders themselves, who understand the concept of islandness instinctively but never feel called-upon to express it in words, except for distinguishing between being ‘on island’ or ‘off-island’.

This chapter, then, attempts to grasp that metaphysical sense of islandness—Conkling’s ‘instantaneous recognition’ that even visitors experience—that is often so hard to put into words.

5.1 *Islandness: Boundedness and Connectedness*

*from ‘Deep Space’
(for John Steffler)*

*The ocean connecting people down through the centuries
yet a chaos, too,
living near the ocean, or living off the ocean
trying to make a living from it
has a profound influence on people’s sense
of what they can own
and possess
and preserve*

No one can own the sea
you can assign fishing grounds, and you can make nautical charts
but you can’t walk around on it, you can’t fence it
the land rarely rears up and smashes your house
wrecks your garage or barn
but the sea does that regularly
It comes and it sweeps away wharfs and it breaks up boats

In the world I grew up in
people could at least pretend
they were more protected from the vagaries of existence

But here there’s been no hiding

The meanings of the word ‘bound’, in seeming opposition to one another, work as a metaphor for islandness. An example. In 2010, when I was heading to Tasmania to begin my PhD studies, I decided to keep a blog. I called it ‘Tasmania-bound’.³³ I created it as a way to share the journey with my friends and family back home, and to sort out for myself what I was feeling and thinking. Sometimes writing it made me homesick. When I was returning home to Prince Edward Island ten months later, someone asked me if I was going to change the name of my blog, since I was no longer bound for Tasmania. I shrugged it off, thinking I’d consider it when I got back home. But once I was home, it did not take long to feel the indelible imprint Tasmania had left on my psyche. I was homesick all over again. I realised then that I

³³ The blog is found at <http://www.tasmania-bound.blogspot.com>.

was inexorably bound to Tasmania. So I see no need to change the name of my blog: I am still Tasmania-bound.

Boundedness and connectedness: two sides of the same coin. First: boundedness. A feeling that you are physically and emotionally trapped or imprisoned by the encircling sea. You are suffering from island~~ed~~ness. But at other times boundedness makes you feel cocooned and comforted: the encircling sea a moat that keeps good things in and bad things out. You revel in your island~~ed~~ness. Where you find yourself on the continuum between prison and paradise can be as variable as the tide.

At the same time, the ocean boundary serves to bind its inhabitants together, giving them a shared sense of identity (a form of solidarity at its most pronounced), akin to Lamarck’s theory of genetic inheritance influenced by environment, what Sugars (2010: 8) referred to as ‘a scientifically outmoded concept which nevertheless finds expression in discussions of cultural origins and transmission’. Sugars also observes that, ‘despite the fact that Charles Darwin refuted the notion that “knowledge” and “memory” were inheritable traits, this belief has informed much modern thinking about group identities, and, indeed, notions of collective destiny’ (9). These longstanding connections cross geographical and temporal boundaries, and through a binding together, islanders become bound *to* their island, experiencing a ‘subterranean connection’ (MacLeod, 1999: 163; Brinklow, 2007) to place and to the past that is, for some, unbreakable. As Péron (2004: 330) writes:

The omnipresence of the sea intensifies the feeling of being cut off from the rest of the world. The maritime barrier is always there, solid, totalizing and domineering, tightening the bonds between the island folk, who thus experience a stronger sense of closeness and solidarity.

For some islanders, particularly on geographically remote islands such as Tasmania, being far from ‘the centre’ is part of island life; the ability to leave is difficult because of the distance, time, and expense involved. It was acutely so before air travel, when routes to ‘away’ were not as easily accessible as they are now—although it is still prohibitively expensive for most to travel to and from Tasmania.

For others, crossing the ocean is an integral part of the island condition. For centuries, islanders the world over have experienced a *psychic* restlessness that mirrors the *sea*’s restlessness (Gillis 2004, 2014; Connell, 2007)—whether it be an urge to explore the world, or, by choice or necessity, pursue education, seek employment, or just escape the boundedness of island community. But on islands such as Newfoundland, where travel and migration prevail, boundedness and connectedness to the outside world represent ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ (Baldacchino, 2006: 5; DeLoughrey, 2007; and others). And in-migration is just as important as outmigration (influences from beyond the watery boundary are further discussed in Chapter 8 when I address issues of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’).

Bruny Island’s John Cameron (2011: n.p.) reflects on this type of porous or permeable boundary: ‘We are bounded, and within that boundary we have great freedom once we stop chafing against those boundaries. But similarly, it’s that which connects, so that shoreline here is a permeable boundary that really connects the underwater world with the air world, the rock world’. The shore or edge becomes both ‘threshold and limit’ (Hodge, 2005: 12), an onramp to the sea that connects and binds to other land masses, whether they be smaller islands or larger ones, isolated coastal communities or larger mainlands. As Françoise Enguehard (2012: n.p.) says: ‘It’s not so much of a road, it is the potential of a road. It’s the potential of a frigging avenue! Everything is open, everything is possible’ (2012: n.p.). She says that, during the nineteenth century, islanders of St Pierre did more business with Prince Edward Islanders than they did with the much closer—and poorer, in what the St Pierrais needed, at any rate— islanders of Newfoundland:

We depended on PEI—they’d come in the fall with produce and the sheep, and from Cape Breton Island we got the coal. The sugar and rum came from the Caribbean. We got a lot of stuff from France, too, so that’s interesting, that mixture of cultures, of culinary cultures. People are always saying we had Campbell’s soup and white asparagus from France. People eat *fois gras* but sometimes they do casseroles with Campbell’s Cream of Mushroom. Not me, but some people!

For Enguehard, the road ran both ways, with people and goods and ideas coming *and* going. As John Gillis (2004: 114) writes, ‘in the early modern period islanders were among the most cosmopolitan of all the world’s people, isolated perhaps but hardly insular in their habits and attitudes’. Islanders may be far from perceived centres of power, but the ‘continuous body of water’ that is the ocean, says John Steffler (2013: n.p.), is why Newfoundlanders saw the world in terms different from those of mainlanders: ‘They were aware of the kind of trade routes that connected them to the Caribbean and back even to Europe and to Spain’. Bernice Morgan (2012: n.p.) echoes this connectedness, knowing as a small girl that her seamen uncles had ‘been places like Bermuda and Jamaica and New York because they were on boats. They were much more sophisticated than one would suspect of an island people’. They brought home mementos from their travels: ‘at one point there was a monkey. I remember having a piece of sugar cane and chewing on it until all the sweetness was gone. They’d bring it home just as a curiosity. I don’t know what happened to the monkey’. Morgan notes that many of her relatives lived in the United States, ‘more down there than in Canada’, and that most people she grew up with were very aware of the outside world. She says, ‘their geography, I suspect, was much better than mine is’.

For many, becoming aware that they lived on an island occurred only when they had to leave. As noted in Chapter 4, the effort to travel to or from an island—via a mode of transportation whereby your feet or wheels do not touch ground—becomes much more deliberate when islands are involved. Marjorie Doyle (2010: 298) sums up the barrier separating the island of Newfoundland from mainland Canada when she writes: ‘The Gulf of St Lawrence was only 90 miles wide, but it might as well have been 9,000’. The barrier may be physical—since you must have money and means to cross it—but it is more often psychological: fear of leaving the familiar, fear of heading into the unknown. Indeed, Wayne Johnston takes it one step further when he writes in his memoir, *Baltimore’s Mansion* (1999: 94): ‘The other side of the gulf was remoter than the moon’.

Painter David Keeling (2011: n.p.) knows how it feels to be trapped on an island, but what makes it bearable is the fact that he can leave from time to time. He says,

Tasmania has been a great place to work from, as long as you can get out. But you see we’re a bit retired here at the moment cuz _____’s [relative has] got dementia. She’s eighty-seven next week, and we can’t really go away—she’s her only child. I find the winters here now start to get me down a bit. I think that’s a consequence of—apart from overnight trips to Melbourne or Sydney—not going anywhere.

Péron’s ‘omnipresence of the sea’ is echoed in the words of Wayne Johnston’s character, Joe Smallwood, in *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998: 389): ‘Nothing so enisles you like the sea’. According to Johnston (2012: n.p.), he meant ‘enisles’ in a literal sense, as well as a metaphysical one:

When I said ‘Nothing so enisles you like the sea’, it sounds obvious, because how many things enisle a region? You can be landlocked and be enisled in every state of union in the US [since] most of them are surrounded by other states. But the difference is, you could walk to the next state. You could ride a horse, you could take a horse and buggy, you could take a train ... You couldn’t do that in Newfoundland. So ... well into the twentieth century, and still today into the twenty-first, [it] affects people’s world view. And not always for the worse.

The physical state of being islanded has a direct psychological effect on Smallwood’s feelings of enislement. At the same time, Smallwood questions the existential nature of the sea: how his own smallness and insignificance in the face of the infinite ocean makes him feel cut off from something larger—in this case, God—enisling him. (I describe this point further in Chapter 6 in my discussion of the ways in which artists take inspiration from their islands.)

For some, the sea is a fence that hems them in: ‘People move to an island to get away from the rat race, but sometimes that means they corner themselves, they get backed up against a wall with no way to escape except for the path they came from’ (Vannini, 2012: 124). And while Bruny Island’s Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) has never felt trapped within that fence, she has seen it in others:

I’ve met a few women that have moved there because they’ve had to, their husbands really wanted to be there. This one woman in particular felt trapped. She said, ‘I just feel like I stand on the island and I look out to the Southern Ocean and I feel that civilisation is on my back and I’m looking towards nothing’. So she found that distance and that lack of civilisation really very oppressing. There was no kind of containment for her.

And while Tasmania’s Rees Campbell (2011: n.p.) has never felt ‘imprisoned in any way’, she says:

I’ve had quite a few arguments with people about whether small communities are a salve or a poison. I think it’s perception. Many of us, of course, welcome the smallness to stay small. Many of us are safe in small. And I like to think that’s why [islands] are worlds, because they’re only small in your mind. You’re only constrained by your perception of your constraint.

Campbell adds that Tasmania’s coast ‘is the thing that shows me that I’m on the island’, helping her ‘know and belong to my place’. Fogo Island’s Carol Penton (2012: n.p.) adds: ‘I often have people say that they couldn’t stay here longer than a week, because they felt isolated. I don’t know what that means to feel isolated. It plays nothing in my mind’.

For many, then, being surrounded by water is a blessed state: the defined edge, the demarcated, liminal space found at the shore, brings a sense of comfort. A resident of one of Vancouver Island’s Gulf Islands describes this sense thus: ‘it takes three ferries to get here from Vancouver; that’s at least half a day’s worth of travel. It’s like I have three moats protecting me’ (quoted in Vannini, 2012: 69). And, like all good fences that make good neighbours, the sea serves to keep the outside out and the inside in—for better and for worse. Actor and visual artist Sheila Norgate (2013: n.p.) of Gabriola Island shared her perspectives on this matter in the following terms: ‘with the island, with water surrounding almost like a moat, you do have to watch the tendency to insularity. We find ourselves saying, we don’t want other people to live here, we don’t want this to get any bigger’. Norgate uses the word ‘insularity’ in the negative sense; she recognises how easy it is to become a ‘gatekeeper’, protecting the

island’s small population from increasing while knowing full well that she, too, ironically, has made the population ‘bigger’ (discussed in Chapter 8).

Vancouver Island writer Jack Hodgins (2013: n.p.) calls the water a ‘fence all around. That idea of containment, being self-contained, being very separate from other places—you know where the end of the world is. I really like that idea’. On the mainland he says, ‘there was that sense of the world stretching out unstopped in all directions, that sense you don’t have when you’re on an island’. But Françoise Enguehard (2012: n.p.), who grew up on St Pierre and now lives in Newfoundland, recognises the contradiction inherent in being fenced in: ‘there’s such a freedom looking at the ocean, and at the same time, being fenced in’. Many who live on an island feel less bounded there than they do on the mainland. Bruny Island’s John Cameron (2011: n.p.), who spent most of his life on mainland Australia, agrees:

I’ve come to really appreciate that limitations and boundedness give you great freedom. It seems relevant [since,] in the larger sense of humanity, we’re up against our ecological limits in all kinds of ways. But actually embracing and accepting limitation paradoxically gives you great freedom within that because you’re not fighting against them. On an island you’re just that much more aware of it, physically, and to some degree socially and psychologically. But it’s just like the shoreline: you can look on it as a boundary which divides land from water, or it can be seen as that which connects. I’m seeing it more and more as that which connects.

For Fogo Island’s Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.), the paradox is evident: he has found freedom in the boundedness because of the lifestyle his island affords him:

It’s the freedom. I can go outside, I don’t have to look either way, I can just get aboard the car or truck, and go in anybody’s shed, or anybody’s house, talk to anybody. I never trespassed on anybody—trespass is not a word you use. It’s a place where you can put on your snowshoes, jump on your skidoo ... go ice-fishing, go rabbit-catching, cut wood ... go fishing, jump aboard a speedboat, go that way. There isn’t anyone on your back. To me, that’s the best thing in the world. If you’re living in the city or living in anywhere else, you got a driveway, or a back yard, that’s all you own, the rest of it belongs to someone

else. And there’s rules and regulations everywhere. That to me is like a bird in a cage.

Logic would dictate that being on an *island* is like being ‘a bird in a cage’, with the ocean representing the cage, and not the other way round, suggesting that islandness might share some characteristics with a cowboy mentality—whereby the stereotypical cowboy prefers the open range because he eschews rules and fences and loves living alone in the great outdoors. But, at the same time, with that sense of individuality comes community: as breathing to many islanders are acts of helping out one’s island neighbours in times of need without expecting anything in return—gestures known as generalised reciprocity (discussed further in Chapter 8).

Perhaps these sentiments about how islanders relate to a piece of land bounded by sea reflect a sense of ownership. John Steffler (2013: n.p.) compares Newfoundland to Ontario, where he now lives:

I think of the ocean as being a kind of chaos, something way beyond control ... Like here [Ontario], people own land, or they think they own it. And they fence it ... and almost police it in terms of intruders and what’s happening on it. Nobody can really own [the sea] ... The fact that the island is bounded by the ocean ... and it’s not of human artifice or making ... highlights the difference between nature and culture, and foregrounds and outlines what we’ve made and who we are.

Some islanders feel that their islands cannot be owned or controlled; that ownership is ephemeral when what they own is eroded or destroyed by the ocean; and, in Tasmania, some go so far as to treat it as a ‘commons’ (Thomas, 2002: n.p.) when building their cottages or ‘shacks’ (discussed further in Chapter 8).

Yet, land ownership and land use on islands is hotly contested when there is only a finite amount of it. For instance, witness the number of Royal Commissions and Task Forces on land use on Prince Edward Island alone: in 1973, 1990, 1997, 2009, and 2012 (Government of PEI, 2012). As Harry Baglole (2002: n.p.) writes:

A stranger to our shores might deduce from this rash of studies and strategies that we Islanders are especially fond of land use—that we take particular

delight in the politics and bureaucracy of organizing and controlling our territory through such collective means. Nothing could be further from the truth. On the one hand, we recognise the necessity for action to govern our land base in the public interest—to protect our wonderful landscape, to maintain our land base for agriculture, to minimize urban sprawl, to curtail unsightly and inefficient ribbon development along our highways, to preserve the scenic vistas of our shorelines. But, on the other hand, as individuals and landowners, we fiercely resist the right of the public—in the guise of any form of government, be it national, provincial or municipal—to tell us what to do with our land.

Baglole has found that on ‘virtually all small, off-shore islands in northern Europe, whether in England or Scotland, or in Scandinavia, or in the Baltic ... rural landscape and land use are managed much more vigilantly there ... they feel the need to manage their limited land base efficiently and to protect their landscape’.

One gains a sense of ownership and freedom by having access to what lies beyond the land’s edge—using boats, ships, kayaks, canoes, even float planes (popular throughout Canada’s west coast ice-free islands), and that, for some, makes the difference between feeling cocooned or trapped. Sculptor Craig Benson (2013: n.p.) of Piers Island, BC, talks about the contrast between escaping constraints and living in a place that some people would say is very bounded or very constrained. He never feels as if it is a prison. What made the difference for him was becoming very comfortable travelling on water. ‘Anytime we have free time we just jump in the boat’, he says. ‘It feels very open living here, as opposed to being closed’.

Visual artist and painter Joanna Streetly (2013: n.p.), who lives on a float home year-round off the west coast of Vancouver Island, loves the freedom of a kayak: ‘You’re so connected to the water, so elemental, and it’s something you don’t feel in any other kind of watercraft’. The fact that she lives on a float home near Tofino, which she has moved many times—‘up the inlet, down the inlet, into the harbour, across the harbour. The view has changed many times, but the house has remained the same’—gives her a unique perspective on ownership. Float-home owners are more driven by lifestyle than politics, unlike the Seasteading movement in the United States, which

espouses ‘permanent, autonomous ocean communities, enabling innovations with new political and social systems on semi-stationary, floating platforms’ (Steinberg et al, 2012: 1533). Streetly thinks of her home as ‘kind of an island of its own’, ‘bounded and safe’ in the turbulence of the Pacific Ocean. She enjoys ‘living in a small place, where you can know all the boundaries. But yet there is that element of surprise, because of that constant motion of the sea, changing the landscape and bringing in things from far away. That is the constant that feeds my creativity’.

Tamania’s Rees Campbell (2011: n.p.) appreciates kayaking as a way to interact more freely with the non-human world, deepening her connection to her island and helping her to better determine her role on the planet. She likens the kayak to a two-way mirror, seeing the land as she knows it from a completely different view: the water. She appreciates the interaction with the non-human world that you can only get from a boat:

I’ve told you about my penguin experience, where it tried to climb into the kayak. We’ve had dolphins who play, deliberately rolling under and making eye contact. I saw one show its baby once. We dominate so much, but in a kayak you can’t dominate anything.

Preceding paragraphs demonstrate that humans’ relationship with water is a complex one, but overwhelmingly the artists with whom I spoke—particularly on the small islands off islands, such as Bruny Island, Fogo Island, and British Columbia’s Gulf Islands—found it to be positive, taking from it sustenance and muse, seeing it as barrier *and* road. On these smaller islands, people are much closer to the sea, physically and psychically; people are more dependent on water transportation for mobility to services that may only be available on the larger island, and they are more likely to use watercraft for recreational purposes. But while the water serves as a connector, it also separates and isolates the island from other pieces of land—the mainland or other islands. Newfoundland’s Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.) makes the distinction between separation and isolation: ‘There’s bound to be a certain sense of isolation from other parts of the world if you’re on an island. But isolation isn’t quite the right word, because people were travelling all over the world. Not the women so much. But still, you are separate, it takes effort to get somewhere else’.

Boundedness, for Dragland, suggests containment and limitation, which *can* result in feelings of claustrophobia:

When I was first here I was introduced to a guy from the English department [at Memorial University] who was just retiring and he couldn’t wait to get the hell away. I thought, you poor bugger, you’ve spent all that time in this place which has so much to offer and you hated it, and you couldn’t leave. Well, there’s a man who’s bounded. Not so much by the island as by the academy. So you can be bound by the culture. You can be a police person of the culture and not want anything in.

But, Dragland also notes: ‘you can see this place the way [poet and Memorial University English professor] Mary Dalton sees it, as the centre of the world. In fact, she uses as a metaphor the Newfoundland-centred map. She’s a cosmopolitan person with a strong local identity. Now that’s not bounded’. The ‘island effect’, then, works three ways in this instance: first, the professor who feels trapped by the islandness of Newfoundland; second, he feels trapped within the university life, or what Dragland calls ‘the academy’³⁴; and, third, he is trapped within his own emotional disconnection from all that ‘this place’ has to offer. For the professor, life in Newfoundland is a prison, and he can neither let things in or out—culturally or emotionally. But for others, like poet Mary Dalton, you can be firmly grounded in your place, yet be a citizen of the world.

5.2 ‘So far from everything’

The fisherman asked the visitor where he was from. ‘Atlanta’, he replied. The fisherman knitted his brows. ‘Atlanta?’ It soon became clear that the fisherman had little knowledge of this place called Atlanta, which, of course, greatly surprised the visitor. ‘Why, Sir’, he said. ‘Atlanta is a major city, of several

³⁴ In St John’s there is a recognised divide between ‘town’ and ‘gown’, some of which Memorial University is trying to overcome through the Harris Centre for Regional Development, which links ‘Memorial researchers with groups all over Newfoundland and Labrador, supporting active community engagement throughout the research process’ (<http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre/>).

million people, about fifteen hundred miles from here’. ‘Well, now’, responded the fisherman, ‘isn’t that somethin’ else. So many people, and them so far away from everything’ (Weale, 1998: 116).

For island dwellers, the island is ‘clearly the centre of the world’ (Péron, 2004: 328) or the ‘still point of the turning world’ (Weale, 1998: 116). Those who live on the island of Rapa Nui or Easter Island, for instance, call their homeland ‘Te Pito Te Henua, the navel of the world’. Just as the navel implies an umbilical cord, it suggests the centre of the body. Judith Schallansky (2010, 14) writes: ‘Any point on the infinite globe of the Earth can become a centre’. Often it is that visual representation of centring that creates and reinforces the notion that you are disadvantaged on the periphery. You *think* you are peripheral, or outside mainstream society, because you believe what the powers-that-be tell you when they say you are not at the centre.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND CENTRE WORLD

This is an AZIMUTHAL EQUIDISTANT PROJECTION centred on St. John's, Newfoundland. Only distances and directions measured along straight lines radiating from the centre are true. All straight lines passing through St. John's are great circles. Deformation of the earth surface increases outward from the centre and measurements taken other than through the centre are inaccurate.

SCALE along any straight line through the centre
1000 0 2000 4000
Kilometres
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000
Miles

© Department of Geography, Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland, CANADA

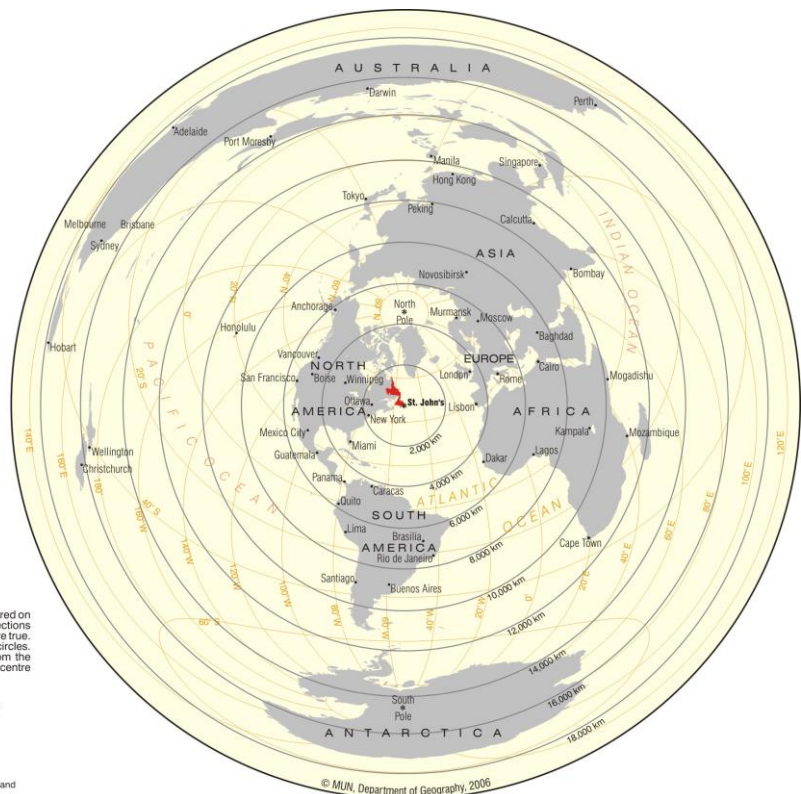


Figure 5.1 – Newfoundland-centred map (used with permission of Memorial University)

Several years ago, Memorial University’s Department of Geography created ‘The Newfoundland Centre World’, an Azimuthal Equidistant Projection map centred on

St John’s, as a visual and symbolic representation placing Newfoundland at the centre, NOT on the periphery of continental North America.

In an interview with Helen Porter (1995: 17-18), Dalton referred to the map in response to a review of her poetry book, *The Time of Icicles*: ‘voices like [Dalton’s] remind us that ours is a culture where the real talent has always come from the hinterland’. Dalton says:

I think the reviewer is locating the centre and then identifying a hinterland. I smile at the word ‘hinterland’. There’s a lovely map called the ‘Newfoundland-centred universe’. Mine is a Newfoundland-centred universe, so I don’t perceive myself on the hinterland ... I am the centre of the universe. I don’t spend a lot of time going around saying I am marginalised. That’s a very crippling way to be viewing oneself.



Figure 5.2 – Tasmania-centred map: ‘Mapping the world from where you are’
(Sunny Spells, 2009)

Maps like the Newfoundland- and Tasmania-centred maps are a graphic reminder

that the centre of the world is where *you* are, on your island, and that, as Dalton says, to view yourself as otherwise—particularly ‘marginalised’—can be crippling to one’s self-esteem, personally and collectively (further explored in Chapter 8).

Both Prince Edward Island and Tasmania share map stories: both have been left *off* maps that have been created elsewhere, leading to islanders feeling ‘slighted’ and evoking derision toward mainlanders. Most recently, in August 2014, Tasmania was left off the map on uniforms worn by the Australian Commonwealth Games team, garnering national media attention, as well as much discussion via social media. As Hobart’s daily newspaper, *The Mercury*, reported: ‘Swimsuits worn by athletes in Glasgow feature kangaroos, emus and maps of Australia, but no visible sign of Tassie ... Chief Executive Perry Crosswhite ... maintains that while the design and placement of Australia and the kangaroo is different for each garment all include Tasmania but “at times the kangaroo covers the ‘area’ where Tasmania is”’ (2014: 6). Similarly, in 1982 at the Opening Ceremony for the Brisbane Games, Tasmania was missing when performers formed a map of Australia. Islanders regard being left off a map as a stark and symbolic representation of the way mainlanders frequently treat islanders as peripheral. In his poem, ‘John of the Island’, Prince Edward Island poet Frank Ledwell (2006: 34–5) takes up the cause: ‘*It is hard to say what this Island means to others. A huge map in British Columbia’s Tourism Information Centres does not show it—an empty space in the Gulf of St Lawrence ... I do not need a map to tell me I am here*’.



Figure 5.3 – Student notebook cover: Prince Edward Island missing. Photo by Patrick Ledwell (used with permission)

Tasmania’s Peter Conrad (1988: 4) writes about his childhood textbooks omitting Tasmania from the map:

At school we were given plastic maps to trace, with dotted lines standing for those invisible fences drawn across scrub and desert to divide the states.

Tasmania, disconnected by Bass Strait, was an embarrassment to this cut-out continent; it was therefore simply left off. We passed the time outlining the contours of a country we didn’t belong to.

This omission cut Conrad to the core, leaving him bereft and wondering ‘where *am* I?’ (1988: 7). Even the pictures of his country were a country he did not see out his windows: ‘The Australian landscape had omitted us’ (1998: 4). But, after losing himself in ‘the Noddyland or Neverland or wonderland or secret garden of English books’ (1988: 10), Conrad left for England when he was twenty, though, he says, ‘mentally I left very early ... the body had to wait much longer before it could

follow’ (1988: 10). It was not until many years later that Conrad was able to think of and start to cherish Tasmania as home.

5.3 Home

*from ‘Always Leaving’
(for Michaye Boulter)*

*You learn to climb before you can walk
swim before you can talk the language of
the wind that lures you to shore
then makes you leave again*

*You learn down by the tilt of the deck
up by the tilt of the stars
numbers by counting the whites of the waves
and letters by tracing clouds edged by the colours that become your words
that run into sky and water
bleeding the hundred shades of blue
across your canvas*

The idea that many islanders are among the most travelled of the world’s inhabitants speaks to the porousness of their boundaries; yet islanders continue to find their way home. While journeying, Douglas Porteous (1990: 158) writes, ‘home remains the territorial core. The necessary sense of adventure gained by venturing from home is supported by knowledge that the home remains intact and the ways back to it are known’. In order to be able to travel out into the world, one must have a home to come back to. And if that home is one that is known intimately in the mind and the heart—as an island so often is—then that pull to home can be impossible to resist. Writes Porteous (1990: 107): ‘The idea of home as a base, a source of identity . . . is the goal of all the voyages of self-discovery which have become the characteristic shape of modern literature’. He goes on to assert that ‘journeys are necessary in order to discover primitive roots. Exile is likely, and even in exile one is surrounded by those who re-create home . . . home tugs throughout our adult lives’ (142–3).

From *The Odyssey* onward, the world is replete with stories of travellers journeying outward from their islands into the world, and then making their way back home. Writes geographer Edward Relph (1976: 43):

There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which we orient ourselves to the world.

I read this quote to all my participants, and nearly every one responded by saying that Relph’s words resonated strongly. From an island to a town to a rock on the shore to a particular room in a house, my participants were able to identify a place that was uniquely and wholly theirs, where they could let down their masks and be completely themselves, experiencing what Relph (1976: 55) calls ‘existential insideness ... the insideness most people experience when they are at home and in their own town or region, when they know the place and its people and are known and accepted there’. It is about that feeling of belonging, when someone ‘is part of a place and it is part of him’.

What is so special about an island that islanders are inexorably drawn back to it? Says Tasmania’s Don Kay (2011: n.p.), ‘I feel origin of place is a much more important thing than often we want to acknowledge. But I have no apology³⁵ about that’. For many islanders, that special sense starts in childhood, with an ‘imprinting’. Barry Lopez (1996: 11) says, ‘imagination is shaped by the architectures it encounters at an early age’; children are fashioned or imprinted by the physical and emotional landscape in which they grow up. They develop what Lopez calls ‘a storied relationship to a place’ or ‘a comforting intimacy’. For many it is a deep body memory; the positive and negative associations with their childhood playgrounds are constantly triggered throughout their lives, akin to leaving ‘handprints when the clay was wet’ (Brinklow, 2012a: 16). And even negative associations with one’s island, such as with the character Charlotte in Bernice Morgan’s novel, *Waiting for Time* (1994: 64), leave their handprint, guiding one’s life just as fiercely:

³⁵ The defensiveness found in the statement, ‘no apology’, is in response to the once strongly held belief by mainlanders that Tasmania was a second-class basket case (an idea further explored in Chapter 8).

Charlotte’s voice is brisk, crackling across six thousand miles, ordering her daughter to get off the island at once. She is lost if she doesn’t, her mother says. Listening to Charlotte explain why this is so, Lav realises that in some strange way Newfoundland is the source of her mother’s strength—a place of mythical horror, a great, dismal swamp from which no traveler returns—no one but her—who, with the resourcefulness of Odysseus managed to rescue herself from this nether world.

For Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.), who grew up in Dover and later Geeveston, her island of Tasmania is a part of who she is: ‘it’s your fingerprint—where you’re from, it’s who you are’:

I feel like my Tasmania is not separate from me: it’s just inside me, this place is me. I was born here. I spent all my very formative years here. Tasmania to me is the sea, it’s the sky, it’s the high country. I’ve been to a lot of other places in the world, and in Australia, and loved them very much, and could imagine living there for a while, but Tasmania is a place apart. I think it’s to do with its islandness, and its distance from the centre. I think because of its size, it has an amazing diversity of landscapes and environments, but you can get to them very very quickly; and so it’s all those places squeezed in so it’s a bit like a jewel.

Eberhard identifies the bottom of the D’Entrecasteaux Channel as her childhood playground. She ‘physically’ remembers those days in and on the bays and lagoons, calling it a ‘body memory’: ‘It was more just a kind of taking in of the sensation of being on a boat, the sensation of the water splashing up, and just the vastness of what’s around you, which I think, again, is an island thing. It’s the vastness, for me, of possibility’. Eberhard sums up her feelings for her island in very physical terms when she says: ‘I think I carry Tasmania inside me wherever I go. I don’t leave it behind. I can’t’.

Others have spoken or written of the integral role of the sea in the construction of their sense of island place. For writer Harry Thurston (2011: n.p.), the smell of the ocean is very evocative; he, too, feels the body memory, having grown up by the sea

on the south shore of Nova Scotia. ‘It is the smell of your origins and your place, of your home. You don’t drink seawater but you taste it through your other senses’.

‘Body memory’ is a theme, too, in the place writing of Danielle Wood. In her novel, *The Alphabet of Light and Dark* (2003: 71), she writes: ‘The place pulls at her, as if gravity were just a little stronger than anywhere else on the planet, even now, after all these years, this island still makes her feel things, makes her want something she can’t have’. The character of Essie is nostalgic for time past, for Bruny Island, which represents the deep pull of home. For Wood, herself, home is the Channel region of Tasmania— Kettering, Woodbridge, Flowerpot, the Huon—where she recognises that ‘gravity’ as body memory. The combination of water and mountain make her feel ‘right’:

And I felt it in Scotland, strangely enough. It had something of here in it. If I go to Maria Island, I’ll climb Bishop and Clark³⁶ because I want a mountain looking at the sea. If you go to Bruny Island you tend to climb up those steps and stand at the top of The Neck and look around ... I do know that if you put me away from the ocean I would be utterly miserable. I find myself looking around feeling unbalanced or something. I suspect the presence of the ocean somewhere on my peripheral vision is so normal I don’t even see it.

Wood’s words, ‘it had something of here in it’, reinforce how place imprints on someone, creating the feeling of home elsewhere strongly enough to be recognised.

Similarly, David Keeling (2011: n.p.) makes the association between childhood feelings and home. He credits his strong connection to the island to seeing the water when he and his family drove to his aunt’s house at Weymouth, on the northeast coast of Tasmania, for vacations: ‘I always remembered driving as a kid, and the first time you see the water: There it is! Just that little patch of blue’. He has a strong association between the childhood anticipation and excitement of seeing the water for the first time with vacationing at his aunt’s house, and he feels nostalgic when

³⁶ Maria Island’s spectacular mountain, Bishop and Clerk, is dual-peaked, with two 620-metre dolerite columns that resemble ‘a bishop wearing a mitre, followed by a clergyman’ (Turnbull, 2009: n.p.).

remembering the experience. Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.), too, is deeply affected by her childhood experiences with water. That same deep-seated/-seeded attachment to home on a boat has become her source of inspiration; her paintings are predominantly of the sea. Language, visual imagery, and even thought patterns were shaped by her surroundings; on the boat she learns about ‘the potential of emptiness, the frequency of falling stars and the intimacy of vastness’ (2012: n.p.). Her words: ‘The curves of my bed hold me in a perfect world. I feel safety in its smallness’ (2012: n.p.) are an example of the childhood imprinting that Boulter has carried for life.

Tasmanian photographer Hillary Younger (2011: n.p.) credits her fierce attachment to the bush to her early days out on her horse in Scottsdale, where she was born, and later Richmond, where her family moved. She says, ‘your young experiences mold you, a deep part of you. That experience meant that when I go into the bush I actually feel at home. I feel at peace, at ease, that a really important part of me resides and comes to life. I just feel incredibly connected to the earth’. She wonders if what she feels is akin to Aboriginals’ relationship with the land, and with how they were forced off it in the 1800s. She says:

What I read and what I understand about is that they don’t have a sense of ownership with the land, the land owns them. I can relate to this. Land where I grew up riding, back when I’d go back and there were houses built on it, it hurt. There was pain. There’s a deep connection, there’s a spiritual connection with me, with land, and Tasmania is a really deep part of that.

Louise Oxley (2011a: n.p.) echoes Younger’s connection to Tasmania’s Aboriginal people. She says that she has a few places where she feels most at home, mostly beaches: Sandy Bay, the Derwent Estuary, Nutgrove, Long Beach:

And the other one probably is Oyster Cove where we mostly had the horses, and where I was maybe a more sensitive teenager out riding on the horse. And as I grew to know more about the Aboriginals, and what happened at Oyster Cove, where those last Tasmanians, I suppose we can say, were put. I also came gradually to see it as a highly emotional place, sad, but I was also very attached to it physically.

John Steffler (2013: n.p.), too, compares the connections he has with various places: the farm he grew up on in Ontario and places around Corner Brook, Newfoundland, where he taught in the 1980s. He echoes Porteous when he says that ‘the home place’ in Ontario ‘has continued to form and act as a sort of locus and the root of my psyche’, even as he travelled through Europe in his twenties, seeking out and connecting with ‘the historical home for the culture that I’d grown up with—where the literature and the art that I inherited came from’. But it is Newfoundland where he feels most at home:

There’s a little cemetery on one of those knolls ... that you go past as the ferry enters Port-aux-Basques ... I’m so moved by that, by ... that sense of people’s lives that have been so hard and so full of courage and love, the history of their lives being retained so obviously again, just below the surface, or just on the surface of the place itself. And there, along the gravel landwash, there are graves where people are literally buried in the beach gravel. It says so much about how people have lived, so naked, so exposed to the hardship, and so precariously.

Steffler compares the depth of feeling he experiences in Newfoundland with the farm he grew up on in Ontario, which has since disappeared. ‘I feel that sadly it was, in many ways, a rather shallow home. The way it was disregarded and abused by the people who had lived there, treated only as a commercial asset. Land there was only real estate, only its equivalent in money’. Yet, he observes, life in Newfoundland persists, even as it is, by necessity, lived on the hard rock surface, exposed to the elements.

The feeling of belonging is at the heart of islanders’ attachment to place; home is the place where one experiences ‘existential insideness’—where you can strip off the mask and be most ‘you’. Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) experiences this existential insideness when she heads down the Channel toward her shack:

How do I know it’s home? The topography completely makes sense. The light is just right. There’s a particular point on the road going down the Channel, and it’s about when you hit Snug, and you know you’re out of town—town’s behind you. You’re out of your workaday Tasmanian self, which is a public

self, and you’re into a private self. I think that’s the best way I can describe it. I’ve clocked off being on. Out.

Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.) attributes his connection to place to one word: ‘Love. Occasionally when the wind blows too cold for that bit too long, and we get a harsh frost and it wipes out my garden, I might say something else. I’m just about to go travelling. I’m not a great traveller, so I’m bound to come back loving this place even more’.

Carol Penton (2012: n.p.) attempts to articulate just why she feels so strongly about her island:

I can take my cup of coffee ... and sit out on a rock. I can wade my feet into the salt Atlantic. I can stay there all day. Now that’s not to say that as islanders we have no challenges, no struggles, no worries and fears. Of course we do. We have bills to pay. But that’s exactly how I would describe that: a caring place. The whole land is our playground, and we have a responsibility to make sure that it never changes. If anything ever happens, I want to be one of the last to turn off the lights.

For others, safety is a factor. Says Fogo Island’s Winston Osmond (2012, n.p.): ‘I shouldn’t say it, but we never lock our door. We go away for weeks, and people say, “what about your shed, you’ve got all kinds of tools in there? Why don’t you lock it?” Well, people might want something’. For Carey Lewincamp (2011: n.p.), Tasmania is a safe place to bring up children, ‘in touch with the environment, clean air, healthy food. What I think is really lovely about Tasmania is that it is small enough that people know each other. Most people would know somebody who would know somebody. In effect the children would be looked after’.

While childhood imprinting and safety are significant in creating feelings of attachment to place and home, one’s sense of belonging can be generated by merely being open to what Lawrence Durrell calls ‘spirit of place’, or what Newfoundland Don McKay (2012: n.p.) calls the ‘Tao’ of a place:

If I was more like a Durrell person, or one of these people who says that I’ll wander the world and when I find my spirit is at home, I’ll settle there. But

over the years I’ve come to think that there are many different places, and getting connected with each place is becoming in sync with its ecosystem. If you want to move it out of scientific terminology, it’s the Tao of the place. Becoming interested in it, spending time in it, just getting the feel of it.

Tasmanian photographer Hillary Younger (2011: n.p.) knows this feeling well: she spends days alone in the bush, feeling a deep connection with the wildness of the place. She says, ‘I grew up doing science, but there’s a point where it’s really wonderful to suspend scientific inquisition and to hold onto the mystery of it’. As a young woman, Hillary had moved to Victoria, on mainland Australia, to pursue a career in nursing. But she returned home to Tasmania when she realised how it could feed her deep desire for being in *real*/wilderness and thus feed her photographic practice. She says: ‘I woke up one morning and it was like an epiphany. It was this totally irrefutable blinding flash of realization that I had to come back to Tassie ... there wasn’t even a glimmer of doubt’. Since her return, she has immersed herself in photographing Tasmania, mentoring with some of her idols, particularly Rob Blakers and Simon Olding. When she first came back, she had thought, ‘wouldn’t it be amazing to be hanging in an exhibition with these guys. It was completely surreal to have my very first exhibition be with them, in December 2010’.

While most of the people I interviewed were of the opinion that place mattered to their work, there were two artists I approached who did not want to be interviewed: Tasmania’s best-known fiction writer, Richard Flanagan; and Newfoundland’s ‘Man of a Thousand Songs’, singer-songwriter Ron Hynes. Each cited their belief that place did not matter to their art practice, and that they did not wish to be labeled or pigeonholed into any one place. They did not want to be seen as parochial artists, but rather they believed their art transcended place, even while the subject material, setting, and/or characters were firmly rooted in their islands of origin (further examined in Chapter 6). Perhaps Don McKay (2012: n.p.) helps to shed light on this: ‘There is something about this sort of home talk and place talk that’s mythological. And I wonder if that is, in some ways, kind of damaging. There’s a downside to it, an absoluteness to it’. Or it may have been a marketing decision: publishers sometimes feel that to be too closely associated with a region ghettoizes (or, ironically, ‘*islands*’) a writer, resulting in fewer sales because he or she is not a national name.

But I almost sensed a fear in these two artists: perhaps they did not want to engage with the idea of place lest it interfere with their muse—the magic they derive from writing so deeply of home.

Newfoundland’s Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.) believes that it is her responsibility as a writer to be ‘borderless’, to be able to write from anywhere. She says:

It’s not really a politically or consciously politically driven agenda to write about Newfoundland. It’s really a sensual response to a place where I happen to be. But also I’m glad the writing comes out that way, because I think it’s important as a writer not to be fettered by notions of nationalism or political affiliations or even a sense of belonging. I think that writers have to be able to step into the skin of anyone anywhere, and maybe to be able to step into the skin of any place.

Newfoundland’s Wayne Johnston (2012: n.p.) found that, early in his career, he could only write while living away from his home island. He found he ‘couldn’t settle down here as a writer. Felt I had to go away, had to go somewhere’. In his memoir, *Baltimore’s Mansion* (1999: 236), he writes:

I have chosen the one profession that makes it impossible for me to live here. That I can only write about this place when I regard it from a distance. That my writing feeds off a homesickness that I need and that I hope is benign and will never go away, though I know there has to be a limit. And that someday it will break my heart.

Johnston’s writing is grounded in an intensity of emotion surrounding his island of Newfoundland, but he refers to this intensity as a kind of pathology, a sickness that comes from longing for home, an emotion that is so intense that it becomes hurtful. But, in 2012 (n.p.), he says feeding off homesickness is:

less true now than it used to be. But I would say in the first three or four books, setting and place are more important—well maybe the first five books. But I think I’ve come full circle with this new book [*The Son of a Certain Woman* (2013)]. I don’t try to too narrowly see myself or define myself as a Newfoundland writer or a Canadian writer. I see myself more as being in more

of being in a literary tradition than in a political or regional one. But as a writer, home is whatever place I’m writing about. I think it’s more about people than it is about place and setting, lately.

Johnston notes that he feels most at home where his wife Rose is. But, as a writer, he feels most at home in his windowless study in Toronto, where he writes at night: ‘I don’t want pretty birds looking in. As a writer I feel at home. My mind can wander and it does a lot, and it needs to. You have to get out of your present space into that of the book’.

Newfoundland’s Mary Dalton (2012: n.p.) finds herself ‘resisting the notion of island’, seeing the divisions within what is often the perceived unity of the island. At the same time, she grounds her work firmly in Newfoundland. She says:

I guess we have to take geographical imagery from John Donne—you are actually your own continent. I spent a lot of time in Liverpool. Generally I felt, coming back, a sense of ease, very much the sense of ‘I’m at home’. A very thawing effect. I don’t like cliché, but I do find people here have a greater ease of interaction with other human beings. A function, maybe, of size. And again, these are all theories. Some people might say, well, you know you’re an island. Well, you could say, you know you’re a harbour or a cove, and you know that the winter is coming and you’d better co-operate with your neighbour. Can you see me resisting the notion of island? Even though I do believe, at some level of experience, it is significant. And it is an abstraction—well, it is a fact, it’s a geographical fact—but it is an abstraction also that people use to bolster themselves.

Even though Dalton’s work is firmly grounded in Newfoundland, using the island as an abstraction to ‘bolster oneself’ is not something of which Dalton wants to be accused. In a textbook example of ‘performative geographies’ (Fletcher, 2011), to Dalton, the island is inherent in her work; it just ‘is’. On the other hand, Newfoundland’s Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.) is fiercely passionate about being firmly rooted in her island home:

I know a lot of people agonize over roots and belonging and home ... and I realise there are also constrictions to doing that. But I have never agonized or even questioned anything in that territory. It doesn't mean that I'm jingoist. I've lived [in many places in North American and Europe] so it's not a lack of awareness that makes me say this. But there has never been any question in my mind about place and home. As soon as I'm home I feel a sense of comfort.

For Tasmania's Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.), the ocean is an integral part of her connection with place, but she echoes Philip Wolfhagen when she equates place with love: 'If you lose those connections with place, then maybe love becomes much less possible, too'. Peter Adams (2011: n.p.) says that his is a 'love-hate relationship' with the hundred-acre home he calls Windgrove, located on Roaring Beach in southeast Tasmania. He originally came to Tasmania from the United States in 1985:

I often ask myself why am I here, because I've had to give up a lot to stay here. A relationship, friends, a business. I was making \$80,000US a year, so I gave up the potential for a home, family, community. It's not so much to come to Tasmania, because I was going to leave, but I was forced to stay. There was no one reason, other than the land. It felt very compelling, very primal. I just needed to be here, without knowing why.

At times, Adams has found the location of Tasmania 'inconvenient', but he is compelled to stay for personal well-being. He says, 'there was just something present in the land that I need to attach myself to, and that's why I'm still here'. He feels like an apprentice at Windgrove, calling it:

one of the big libraries of the world. The earth and the sea are connected here. Earth, air, fire, and water—all those elements that I think create a balanced place. You talk about sense of place, like, whoa! On a windy day here, you've got air, you've got quality of air. Again, it's been a privilege to be able to experience all these different realms of being on earth.

Although Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) feels similarly connected to her place, she questions whether Tasmanians have recovered from 'white settler anxiety', whereby 'we don't deserve [our place] because we're not indigenous'. Getting past the guilt of

having colonized and nearly decimated the Aboriginal population, and becoming more connected to place, will ‘help the places that we love’. She says, ‘I want to move past that into ‘what do we do next? How do we protect the places that we love?’ We have to start by recognizing and valuing our connection to them’.

These connections to the land, and giving service to the land, are part of what American writer Barry Lopez (1996: 11) calls an ‘ethical unity’: ‘If you’re intimate with a place, a place with whose history you’re familiar, and you establish an ethical conversation with it, the implication that follows is this: the place knows you’re there. It feels you. You will not be forgotten, cut off, abandoned’. This connection or conversation with the land is almost spiritual, and many of the island artists I interviewed felt particularly strongly about it, and articulated those feelings well. For example, Bruny Island’s John Cameron (2011: n.p.), asks, ‘Is this my place, or does this place have me?’ Since he and his partner, artist Victoria King, were ‘called’ to their acreage through a series of serendipitous events, they have worked diligently to restore it to its original state, through planting trees, getting rid of thistles, and trying to figure out how to bring back some of the native trees and grasses. He says:

I’ve felt a growing sense of partnership with the land so that I’m not imposing my human consciousness on it, but I’m taking advantage of and trying to expand my awareness of it ... listening to the various voices and paying attention to the visual clues. I’ve had a sense of entering into participation with the land. I feel like I am being watched as much as I am watching. But it’s reciprocal. The more I pay attention, the more I’m aware that the creatures of the land are paying attention to me ... I don’t want to ascribe a magical separate consciousness to the land. It’s more a growing sense of a huge whole, a unity that includes us and all the creatures here, and all the people who have been here, and the Aboriginal people who have been here, and who’s here now. If we can imagine ourselves in different relationship with place, and with the island, that’s an important step.

Peter Adams is similarly driven to rehabilitate his land at Tasmania’s Roaring Beach, and observes and *feels* the results and ‘vibrations’ of nearly two decades of hard work:

The land is feeling more settled, more vibrant, more alive, more nurturing, because it’s been looked after. I guess you could talk about minimal reciprocity or trying to maximize it. There are days here when I maximize it, by going out in a physical way and planting the trees, putting up the fences to stop the wallabies from destroying the little seedlings. I don’t do enough ... singing up the land, like the Aboriginal woman who ... walks around constantly singing up the land. That just comes from time, and being here, and allowing myself to learn the stories of the land.

Part of the equation of reciprocity with place, creating a spirit of place, includes relating to nature and the wilderness. ‘Islandness’, writes Philip Conkling (2007, 199), ‘means that you live a life closer to nature than most mainlanders do. The rhythms of tides, wind, and storms determine what you do and will not do’. And depending on the size of the island, one can often live in close proximity to nature. For instance, Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.) regularly heads into the bush ‘to go bush-walking, or to go somewhere like Port Davey, to get a bigger, a stronger sense of, a sense of place, of the place itself’.

Carey Lewincamp (2011: n.p.) has a different relationship with the wilderness:

Whilst I absolutely love the environment and stuff, the harshness of the Tasmanian bush grates me. I identify with its harshness, so I can see its beauty and its harshness at the same time, but my favourite style of garden is the English cottage-style garden, with roses and perennials and that sort of stuff. That’s probably some sort of genetic memory there that needs to be recreated where I live here.

Indeed, the city of Hobart is filled with English flower gardens. In an effort to recreate ‘home’ in the style of their English ancestors, many Tasmanians work hard to beat back the wilderness, based on their ancestors’ efforts to tame their surroundings, make them habitable. Others, though, have a more reciprocal arrangement with their gardens, planting native species that thrive in Tasmania’s various climates which range from rainforest to semi-arid conditions, and taking advantage of the fact that they require less maintenance because they are more adapted to Tasmania’s climate.

Participating more fully and physically in the world around us is something that John Steffler (2013: n.p.) espouses. He says he has always been interested in ‘physical sensation, physical place, and our interaction with the physical world. So a lot of my writing has to do with a kind of dialogue with the world around us, or dialogue at least going on inside myself’. He notes that technology plays an increasingly negative role in humans’ attachment to place, which is becoming more acute as we become more urbanised:

It’s always been a very interesting problem, the relationship between culture and nature, or technology and nature, and in particular, information technology and this whole notion of virtual reality where increasingly people can live in a human-created world and have relatively little immediate contact with anything that—at least that they *think*—hasn’t been created by people. Ultimately, this is an illusion because even our bodies are part of nature: we age and get sick and die.

He says that is one of the reasons he moved to Newfoundland: ‘it seemed to be the kind of place that retained a kind of spirit of place that appealed’.

Fogo Island’s Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) shares Steffler’s fears. She says cultures are ‘not being leveled, they’re being flattened’. She warns:

I think we have to be careful. I think that if we cut ourselves off from the fuel. We are going to be lost, just like everybody else is lost. And that comes from the natural. I don’t think anyone living in Mount Pearl, shopping in those box stores and taking their kids to Disneyland, has any connection to what makes us Newfoundlanders, at all.

In discussing belonging and reciprocity with place, artists in both Newfoundland and Tasmania were adamant about their deep connection to their island-as-home. Those who were born and raised on islands articulated a profound sense of home—an outcome of combining childhood imprinting with an intimate knowledge of the island, one that they are able to ‘get their heads around’. For many of those who come to an island later in life, there was an experience akin to Conkling’s ‘instantaneous recognition’, feeling at home almost immediately. Many artists

recognised a reciprocity with the island which feeds their creative impulse, engendering a sense of commitment that could be described in terms of reflexivity, exemplified in Zita Cobb’s (2012: n.p.) words: ‘You belong where you give yourself’. In so doing, bonds with their islands are strengthened: they become bound within and to their islands.

5.4 ‘Hard rock and water’

*from ‘Rock/Shift’
(for Don McKay)*

*When you plug in deep time
everything becomes more complicated.*

When we encounter deep time it’s a humbling experience,
it sort of prefigures what’s happened with people.
Just the first baby step back and that erases us.

...
Hank Williams,
Dr H. Williams, the geologist,
used to call it
the holy ground of plate tectonics.

*And after the ocean has worn the rock away
even the shadow of our bones will be gone.*

Tasmania and Newfoundland share a similar geologic trait: hard rock that is called Dolerite in Tasmania and Labradorite in Newfoundland. Indeed, the nickname for Newfoundland is ‘the Rock’, which, ‘with admirable economy’, observes writer John Gimlette (2005: 1), ‘expresses almost everything they feel about their island home: a sense of isolation, respect, awe, dread, immutability and an affection that goes geologically deep’. Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.) notes, ‘because the rock is so obvious here, [people are] very conscious of the ancientness of the place’. And because Newfoundland’s rock is so ancient, says Fogo Island’s Jack Stanley (2012: n.p.), ‘it holds time in such a big way’. Danielle Devereux (2012: n.p.) says that because Newfoundland has ‘a relatively low population, you can actually see the rock in places. So for me that’s part of why I feel so connected to it’. Artist Gerry Squires in Momatiuk (1998: 89) says, ‘the rocks are like bones sticking out of the ground, with this thin skin of soil’.

Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) finds Newfoundland’s geology to be one of the strongest creators of character, saying that Newfoundland, and Fogo Island especially, ‘is really naked, it reveals itself to you all the time’. When trees and grass cover up the rocks, ‘they get in the way of knowing the place. Because I think Newfoundland is so naked, it draws that out in the people’. Through this statement, then, Cobb illustrates the idea of land having ‘agency’: people are so exposed to the rock, to the elements, that it ‘draws out’ the nakedness in people. She feels that you cannot hide behind your personality, or the artifice or masks that you wear in day-to-day life:

Here you feel your own vulnerability so much more, and when you feel vulnerable, then you’re more open, you’re more you. It used to be when people lived rural agricultural lives, character was really important. Where we were deeply bonded with the people around us, and working side by side, I didn’t have to be all that entertaining and interesting, because you just knew my character. This whole idea of developing a personality, and how to be interesting, how to work a room, that came much later when we became so separated from each other. All of us have developed so many personalities, we’ve lost touch with our character.

Newfoundland’s Don McKay (2012: n.p.) agrees that everything flows from the island’s terrain, including the culture of the people: ‘It’s inhospitable to agriculture so we’re turning away from farming. So that determines the culture in an important and fundamental way’, creating rugged characters that mirror the ‘rugged island that’s recently and heavily way-shaven’. Inspired by Newfoundland’s rocky landscape, McKay has done extensive research on the geological history of the island, and has gone on to write two books of poetry inspired by what he’s discovered (further described in chapter 8). McKay believes that geology is also important to the history of ideas, especially in understanding how continents came to be what they are today, and in particular how plate tectonics work; the island of Newfoundland is the result of three land masses floating together, from North America, Africa, and Europe. But just as important to McKay is the mythology:

Newfoundland and Labrador’s provincial rock is Labradorite. It gives the impression there’s a light source inside the rock. It’s uncanny. And the reason

for that is called a schiller, and a schiller comes about because the ray of light enters the rock, and it bounces inside the rock before it comes out. So it is coming from outside the rock. That uncanniness—Inuit people say in their mythology that the northern lights are trapped inside the rock.

In Tasmania, ancient rock formations—particularly dolerite—are recognised for how they ‘embody memory of all that has gone before’ (Hay, 2009: 36). Tasmanian ceramicist Neil Hoffman (whom I did not interview) utilizes, in addition to clay, the rock itself—‘the bones of the earth’—as a ‘medium through which the earth speaks’ (35). In so doing he provides an ‘umbilical’ connection to primordial time, allowing the emergence of ‘a deep, seamlessly derived commitment of localized place in the present’ (36). At the same time, the dolerite formations have contributed in tangible ways to Tasmania’s development, as described in David Leaman’s book (2002), *The Rock which makes Tasmania*. As a geohydrologist, Leaman writes about how dolerite ‘has come to dominate a people, their homeland, their economy, their psychology and their tourism marketing often without knowing’ (Hollis, n.d.: n.p.; see also Leaman, 2002). He points out how the make-up of dolerite made coal-mining difficult, thus preventing growth in the manufacturing sector. The distinctive ‘fluted cliffs’ and ‘organ pipes’, in themselves a tourist draw, helped, then, to create the ‘clean, green’ Tasmania that resulted from limited manufacturing. Both Hoffman and Leaman—through art and science/philosophy—contribute to the idea that geology adds another layer to our understanding and experience of the role landscape and deep time play in islandness.

While dolerite dominates the landscape in many areas of Tasmania, the interaction between sea and rock provides an equally important lens on time. John Cameron (2011: n.p.) delights in the geological formations he finds on the shore, just below his house on Bruny Island. The ocean tides create striking patterns on the shore, exposing the land’s strata and changing shape:



Figure 5.4 – *Beach Ears* (photo by author)

I discovered these features, some of which look like a bulbous mushroom that is just plonked on the shore. Other times [there are] these little indentations that look like carvings, particularly this little seagreen line. All of these things I thought were ancient features of the rock turn out to be actually very recent coastal geomorphological phenomena. In very very short geological time, that the shoreline is being constantly created.

The ancient rock and ‘recent’ formations inspire Cameron to think about the (in)significance of human life in the face of geological time, and to pare away the insignificant things in his own life, allowing him to live more mindfully.

5.5 A ‘time-in’

*from ‘Bending Light’
(for Hillary Younger)*

*Like when you’ve been out in the bush for a week
taking pictures morning and night.
You sense the life in the place,*

*the time, the mood, the pace of the place.
You feel it. You feel the life in it.
You become part of the tree.
You breathe with the tree.
You are the tree.*

Just as the sea has uncovered layers in the land, Cameron (2011: n.p.) finds his island has stripped him down to the essentials of living:

It’s more like a journey into wholeness and integrity that the island has facilitated. I found it to be a time-in, both in terms of time in to myself, as an opportunity to get to know myself better, to get to know some habit patterns I’ve managed to leave well hidden in my mainland busy existence. Here you can’t hide from yourself. It’s part of the essentialisation process, to see one’s warts and habits and things that get in the way, reflected back from the mirror that is the place, and particularly the water. All the things I’d managed to keep more or less hidden from the world, and myself, have become more evident here. That’s part of the island process.

With great economy, Cameron’s ‘time-in’ captures what his life on the island is like: time for himself, and time for digging deeply into his own psyche to discover what really matters to him, as a writer and as a human being. Cameron compares his own short time on Bruny Island to time spent by Aboriginal people who once lived on his land:

There are many people, particularly indigenous land-based people who are in the same place generation after generation after millennia, who would have a depth of affiliation and a sense of belonging that I can only imagine. Now, experiencing the force that runs through all living beings ... as well as the things we say are inanimate. Like rocks. There is such a wonderful presence about rocks that I can’t call them inanimate anymore. So it’s more like a culmination of something that I’ve always thought about and been interested in and had occasional glimpses. Now for the first time in my life I’m able to live it and experience it on a more daily sense. I’m very grateful for that.

Being pared to the essentials creates an intensity of island living, a distillation that is compounded by the physical boundary of the island reflecting on a person’s psychological boundaries. Artists find that within the confines of the island, they can live more mindfully, more attuned to the rhythms of the land and the sea. In so doing, they feel a sense of what Hornby Island’s Rachelle Chinnery (2013: n.p.) calls ‘upperlessness’: ‘endless potential, no limitation. In some ways, the key is to be able to rein in and focus on things, because there are so many possibilities, so much potential’. Boundedness has provided Chinnery with a depth in her life, and a greater depth of understanding in her work; about why she makes what she does. The limitations of the island have enabled her to see depth and detail in a way that she has never experienced anywhere else.

While it may not be possible to go horizontally, beyond the island’s physical shore, or even downward, beyond the hard rock surface of Newfoundland and Tasmania, artists find it possible to delve into an emotional depth they might not otherwise experience. At the same time, there is a seeming irony that within the very physical and limiting boundary of an island, artists feel a freedom they do not feel elsewhere: going deeper into themselves allows them to be more who they are, which in turn allows for endless possibility. Tasmanian Robert Dessaix (Ouston, 2014: 31) echoes this:

The thing about islands is that they are places of wonderful freedom because they force you to expand your inner world. Otherwise you’d go mad and asphyxiate yourself. I think that islands are wonderful places—they are quite dangerous, but you are very free. You don’t have to compete with the people who give orders in Sydney or Melbourne or New York or London or Paris. You have this wonderful freedom to be who you want to be.

Fogo Island’s Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) thinks islands bring out the ‘better angels’ in our nature ‘because you can’t get away with a whole lot. We jokingly say on Fogo Island, who in their right mind is going to steal a car? What are you going to do, go get in the ferry line-up?’

Whether it is character, better angels, or endless possibility, one can experience ‘amplification by compression’, a phrase borrowed from the plant world, in which

almost all ecological and evolutionary processes are amplified on islands; and ‘the smaller the island, the more amplified these processes are’ (Percy et al, 2007: 193). An island’s small size, low species diversity, and miniature populations are ‘prone ... to random processes’, resulting in ‘evolutionary radiation’; and islands make it particularly vulnerable to ‘invasion and disturbance’. The authors note that ‘on the plus side, “amplification by compression” makes islands particularly useful to biologists; on islands, processes that may be subtle on continents tend to be more clearly exposed’. And even while it is most advisable to avoid making direct comparisons between islands in evolutionary theory and island culture, ‘amplification by compression’ *is* defensible as a metaphor, especially when Newfoundland and Tasmanian artists speak of their experience of living on an island as distilled, concentrated, compressed. Godfrey Baldacchino has also modified the term slightly, referring to a similar idea as ‘Articulation By Compression’, or ‘The ABCs of Island Living’; in a compressed island, things are more articulate and defined.

5.6 ‘My island as a house’

*from ‘My island’s the house I sleep in at night’
(for Zita Cobb)*

*You didn’t know it at 16
that Uncle Art’s house would become your house
800-square-foot salt box
contains every single bit of space
you need to live a life*

What’s here has a place.
If I want to introduce a new spoon,
that requires some consideration.
It offers all kinds of potential
because you don’t get distracted.

The intensity of island living resonates in bounded and intimate spaces, from our bodies to our houses to poetry. Inspired by Gaston Bachelard’s deeply philosophical and lyrical book, *The Poetics of Space* ([1958] 1994), in this section I explore the

island as body/house/poem, following on Edward Said’s (1979: 54–55) writing about houses and poetry in which he states:

The inside of a house acquires a sense of intimacy, secrecy, security, real or imagined, because of the experiences that come to seem appropriate for it. The objective space of a house—its corners, corridors, cellar, rooms—is far less important than what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel: thus a house may be haunted, or homelike, or prisonlike, or magical. So space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here.

Just as a house ‘acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process’, so, too, do bodies and islands. For instance, as John Murray (1999: xvii) reminds us, just like an island, ‘every person born in this world has a coast, an edge, a boundary, a transitional zone between themselves and the world’. And Gillian Beer (1990: 271) goes a step farther back, to the womb:

The tight fit of island to individual to island permits a gratification which may well rely not only on cultural but on pre-cultural sources. The unborn child first experiences itself surrounded by wetness, held close within the womb. It is not an island in the strict sense since it is attached to a lifeline, an umbilical cord. It becomes an island, an isolation, in the severance of birth.

From conception, then, our bodies are encircled by water, with a thin vernix separating skin from amniotic fluid, attached by a thin lifeline as it awaits its first crossing down the birth canal, becoming truly islanded when the cord is cut.

First, then, is *the porous boundary*. Just as the skin has pores that let oxygen and fluids pass in and out of the body, so, too, does an island have a porous boundary: the shore. Our house, of course, is an extension of the body; the walls are the edge of our living space. Bachelard ([1958] 1994: 5) writes:

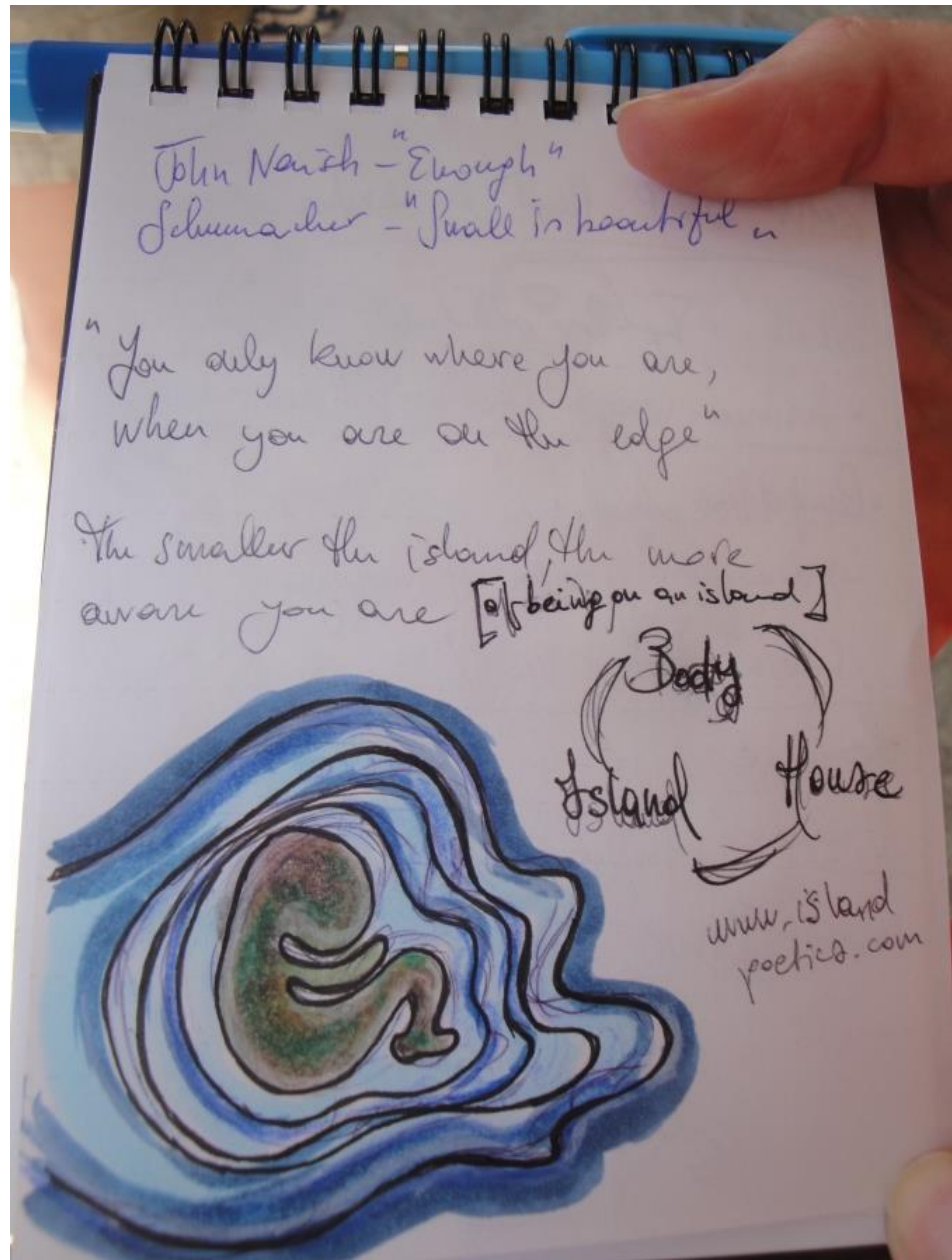


Figure 5.5 – *Notes on a talk* by Francesca Panatta
(used with permission of the artist: www.panatta-illustration.com)

We shall see the imagination build ‘walls’ of impalpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of protection—or, just the contrary, tremble behind thick walls, mistrust the staunchest ramparts ... An entire past comes to dwell in a new house.

The water currents and waves lapping the island, the air currents caressing our skin, the wind rustling the curtains—are all the life force (or ‘*retentir*’ as described in chapter 4), ‘filling it to its limits, into a vibrating, sonorous world ...’ (Bachelard,

[1958] 1994: xvii). But this wall boundary is also permeable, with doors and windows and chimneys able to open and close to the outside world. The door is the threshold—in or out, coming or going, just like any of the body’s orifices, or just like a dock, a promontory, or an airport. Just as the hard rock and sand beach, riprap and wharf, insulate the land from the battering tides, the insulation in the walls determines how drafty the house is, or how much sound permeates. And just as our psyches contain the conflicting feelings one may have for one’s island—cocoon or prison—the walls of our homes hold and nurture the family within, or keep the world out, buffet the family from ‘the other’.

Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) notes that, on his island of Newfoundland, the house was almost communal, as well as familial:

I think it is a sense of where our boundaries are is one of the big differences, and also what you make available to other people as a matter of course. Most Newfoundlanders grew up in communities that were so small that there was no such thing as public space, or, vice versa, private space. The community was your living room. Everybody within your community was connected to you in a way that was almost familial. And there were all kinds of degrees to that: there were people you were closer to than others, but there was no door that was barred to you.

Crummey’s sense of Newfoundlanders’ public space is a kind of porousness; what they ‘make available to other people’ manifests in a legendary generosity and hospitality.

Second: *what lies within*. A house’s rooms and nooks and crannies are like our stored memories, as are the places on our islands we know intimately and hold dear. Writes Bachelard ([1958] 1994: 14):

Thus, very quickly, at the very first word, at the first poetic overture, the reader who is ‘reading a room’ leaves off reading and starts to think of some place in his own past ... But over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits.

The rooms of the house imprint on our psyches; the places on an island do the same. Held deep in memory, the house/island is a place we return to for reassurance, security, comfort. Bachelard ([1958] 1994: 15) elaborates:

The successive houses in which we have lived have no doubt made our gestures commonplace. But we are very surprised, when we return to the old house, after an odyssey of many years, to find that the most delicate gestures, the earliest gestures come alive, are still faultless. In short, the house we were born in has engraved within us the hierarchy of the various functions of inhabiting. We are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house, and all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme.

Like returning to a house you cannot forget, many islander expatriates are compelled to return to their islands on vacation, year after year. They do not forget the ‘various functions of inhabiting’ their islands, and slip easily into the patterns and habits of island living that have imprinted physically, emotionally. In Canada, many expatriate Newfoundlanders, Prince Edward Islanders, and Cape Bretoners have gone so far as to create ‘islander clubs’ that are ‘variations on a fundamental theme’ in their new homes, generally in western and central Canada.³⁷ Doug House (2012: n.p.) notes the numbers of Newfoundlanders who have moved away, and who bring their home island into their houses: ‘it was almost like a shrine ... all the Newfoundland stuff, the photographs, the little statuettes’. This reminder of home in their new house helps to feed nostalgic cravings and maintain and reinforce their sense of Newfoundland identity.

Third: *the depths*. The basement/cellar is Bachelard ([1958] 1994: 18)’s ‘*dark entity* of the house, the one that partakes of subterranean forces. When we dream here we are in harmony with the irrationality of the depths’. This echoes the Aboriginal belief that everything is connected under the water, from island to island, through the rainbow serpent (Bradley, 2010: n.p.); or what Cape Breton’s Alistair MacLeod calls

³⁷ I am told that there are also Maltese clubs in Melbourne, Australia. An area worthy of further research would be to determine if other diasporic islanders from, say, Iceland, the Caribbean, or Pacific islands, form similar clubs in their new homes.

a ‘subterranean river to the past’—through which our ancestral lineage connects us, like DNA, via the conduits of memory and story. Like Sugars’ (2010: 9) discussion of ‘geographical determinism in the construction of a Newfoundland people in which the land is imagined to be somehow in the genes’ (noted earlier in this chapter), memory, inheritance, and story provide the threads that secure us indelibly to the depths of our houses, our ancestors, our islands. In the case of Alistair MacLeod’s Cape Breton stories, which carry the ‘emotional weight’ (Nicholson, 1985: 92) of generations of ancestral knowledge back to the Scottish Isles, along with grief, anguish, and guilt for having left for the New World island of Cape Breton, the depth of emotion continues to affect current generations; what Nicholson calls ‘the significance of ancestral islands long left and never seen’.

Fourth: *bedrock*. The floor is the rock upon which we stand, or the soil in which we put down roots. Says Tasmania’s Carey Lewincamp (2011: n.p.): ‘I can walk onto my place and feel the roots growing out of my feet. I have had to cut those roots off to actually leave ... This is always a haven to come to. Always’.

Fifth: *aerie*. The attic of a house is the dome of sky that surrounds the island, or the head in which we carry our island. Says Tasmania’s David Keeling (2011: n.p.):

[Christopher Koch] says this great thing about Tasmania: compared to the rest of Australia, any other state in Australia, it’s almost possible for you to have the whole idea of the place in your head at once because you can actually drive around most of it. Physically it’s diverse, geologically it’s diverse. But it’s small enough to have an idea of it, to hold it in your head.

Others express their ability—metaphorically, of course—to wrap their arms around an island, enfold it in a hug. While cupping her hands to make a box shape, Bernice Morgan (2012: n.p.) makes the connection between children’s need for a playhouse and the human brain’s need to put things in order, often in enclosed spaces or boxes:

My son said to me, when I was trying to block off the back yard and get it under control, that I like putting things inside enclosed places. I think that’s true. When I was growing up, boys had clubhouses, enclosed spaces, and girls weren’t allowed into them. I was absolutely fascinated by these places—I was

always trying to get into them and shut the door and be by myself. Sometimes there were things like apples in them, and *Playboy* magazines. And they all had a peculiar fusty smell. Enclosed places. A safe place. And certainly I remember rooms—and I’ve always been fascinated by houses—rooms of my childhood.

Morgan’s story about the need for a clubhouse so she could be by herself reverberates with ‘the island drive’—that compulsion to be on an island, separate and safe from the mainland—thus extending the metaphor of the island as a house. Her need to ‘block off the back yard and get it under control’ is similar to feeling like maybe you can dominate your space, your island. And, finally, her reference to ‘rooms of my childhood’ relates to the stories and memories you might attribute to each and every place on the island of your childhood.

And, finally: *the life force*. The hearth is the centre of the house, the beating heart of the body, and the ‘homeness’ of an island. Writes Bachelard ([1958] 1994: 5): ‘All really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home’. An island, an intimate space, is where so many drifters have found home. At the same time, the life force of an island can be examined through the lens of a dwelling perspective, suggested by Vannini and Taggart (2012: 236) as a way of living on the island, of ‘doing’ their island. They write:

From a dwelling perspective we may view islandness as the system of relations constituted by the multi-sensory engagement of inhabitants in their island environments. Such sensory engagement is not only a form of perception of place, that is, of something pre-existing corporeal awareness. Rather, because it is informed by and through movement, rest, and encounter, such sensory engagement is also a process of mutual generation, of constitution, of transformation. Islandness is, therefore, not simply the sense of place typical of islands, but also the multiple ways through which relations among inhabitants, and between islands and their dwellers, are practiced.

Thus, dwelling in one’s body, in one’s house, or on one’s island is an organic, holistic experience: each piece in the body/house/island depends on the other; at the same time, body and house and island are just as interdependent. And always there is

movement, within and without, similar to what Bachelard ([1958] 1994: xxiii) calls a ‘resonance-reverberation doublet’ in a poem. He writes: ‘It is as though the poem, through its exuberance, awakened new depths in us’.

Comparing body, house, and island to a poem, then, is a matter of recognizing the intimate qualities of each, the distilled or concentrated nature of each. Writes Bachelard ([1958] 1994: 6): ‘Now my aim is clear: I must show that the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind’. He goes on to say that ‘the binding principle in this integration is the daydream’, or, in the case of an island, a story. As Conkling (2007: 197) notes: ‘every place, stone, and tree on an island has been made sacred by the lives and deaths of those who mystically connect us across the permeable boundaries of time’. Or, let us take it even smaller, reflecting the bounded form of an island: a poem. Conkling continues (197): ‘If poetry attempts to distil feeling and thought into their most sparse form, the concentration of space on islands is a natural geography for poets’.

Bachelard ([1958] 1994: 12) compares the reverberations found in a poem to those of waves—*retentir*—or to ‘virtues of shelter’:

so simple, so deeply rooted in our unconscious that they may be recaptured through mere mention, rather than through minute description. Here the nuance bespeaks color. A poet’s word, because it strikes true, moves the very depths of our being ... And when it is a poet speaking the reader’s soul reverberates; it experiences the kind of reverberation that, as Minkowski has shown, gives the energy of an origin to being (14).

Thus, just like an island’s boundedness distils life to its essentials, so, too, does the tiny and intimate form of poetry, with words and images carrying meaning beyond the bounds of the poem: ‘Through poems, perhaps more than through recollections, we touch the ultimate poetic depth of the space of the house’ (Bachelard, [1958] 1994: 6). And with that depth, then, comes what Rachelle Chinnery (2013: n.p.) calls ‘upperlessness’, when you rein in and focus deep, leading to that ‘endless potential, no limitation’.

5.7 *Leaving/staying/coming home*

*from ‘Old Sharemen’
(for Winston Osmond)*

Like everyone did
You went to Toronto, for two weeks, then Alberta
Faro mine in the Yukon for longer
but home nagged
the elastic band hauls you back all the time
I knew that if I stayed there this long I would have this much money,
and be this happy.
Or I can go home and be this happy,
broke.

The tropes of leaving and staying, and coming home, are integral to islandness. Says Tasmania’s David Keeling (2011: n.p.): ‘I think people who grow up on islands, it’s always that thing of coming and going. Coming back and going, coming back. There’s something sort of really deeply poetic about it’. While some islanders feel they are forced to leave—for educational or employment reasons or to spread their wings in a wider setting—others are bound to their place. Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.) never felt the need to leave:

I remember reading Peter Conrad ... being quite shocked. Kind of understanding the context of the 1950s, 1960s, it was a very different place culturally, and a very different way of looking at the world, I suppose. I struggle to understand that idea that beyond the mountain there be dragons. I just don’t get that. There is no need to escape. It’s home.

On the other hand, as a child, Fogo Island’s Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) itched to leave:

This felt like a very menacing place. By the time you hit puberty, it feels very constraining. You’d see the airplanes go over because Gander was a very busy airport then. You’d see all the contrails. I used to wonder what it’d be like up there, to be looking down. I always had to get out further, somewhere in the world.

A devout islander, Cobb left her job in the fibre optics industry and returned to Fogo Island committed to revitalizing the island’s economy by using culture and the arts as an economic driver. In 2006, she and her brothers, Anthony and Alan, created the Shorefast Foundation, which aims to make Fogo Island into a centre for sustainable fishery, arts, discovery, and innovation by becoming a world-renowned destination for artistic, cultural, ecological, and culinary pursuits at ‘the edge of the earth’ (Shorefast, 2012: n.p.). Indeed, situated in the community of Fogo is Brimstone Head, considered by the Flat Earth Society to be one of the four corners of the flat earth (NL, 2011). The fervour with which Zita Cobb speaks about her island demonstrates that she is deeply conscious of her personal connection to her island place. Although she spent her working life in urban areas, during the summer she would come home to Fogo Island to ‘reset her compass’. Now she is home to stay: her ‘compass set to home’. Cobb (2012b: n.p.) says, ‘There’s something in the way that people here were so open-spirited—something in the constancy of the place, where—I suddenly felt given back to myself, and I felt I could just go back to being who I’d been all along, and what a great relief that was’. In a media interview (2013: n.p.) she elaborates on this point:

I went away for school and career and all of that. But ... the islandness has never left me and I never wanted it to. I think as I got a bit older, making that turn to circle back became more and more something I wanted to do. I retired in 2001 and spent four years sailing. Of course, in sailing you visit a lot of islands. I’m very intrigued by islands, for obvious reasons. I think they really are, to use maybe an overused word, sustainability laboratories because the things that are happening on little islands are happening on the big island. You know Buckminster Fuller, his space ship earth? As I saw the beautiful places in the world, I just got lonelier and lonelier for home.

Visiting other islands gave Cobb an even greater appreciation for the characteristics of her own Fogo Island, and strengthened her yearnings for home. She has gone on to use that inspiration of ‘islands as sustainable laboratories’ to try to make a difference economically and culturally on her own island.

Fogo Island painter Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.) has experienced comings and goings throughout his entire life. He also left to work, but he returned as soon as he possibly could. He sees the reality of Fogo Island’s limited space and resources, knowing the island can only sustain so many people with the number of jobs available. He says: ‘If you bring people back you’d better bring jobs for them’, but he also knows that many who grew up on Fogo Island ‘can’t seem to stay away. Every summer they have to pack up and come home. Or there’s always plans of coming home. They always talk when they retire, if I win the lottery, I’ll come back home’.

Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) knows about leaving, then coming home again. He lived in Ontario for twelve-and-a-half years before returning home permanently in 1999. He says the move surprised a lot of people, ‘and there was something almost celebratory about it when I would see people downtown and they would assume I was home for a visit. I’d say, no, I’ve moved home for good. “We got one back”’. Crummey says he was not surprised by his return, as he maintained strong ties to Newfoundland, with frequent visits home, and writing about Newfoundland in his poetry and novels. He says, ‘it’s natural [to] want to escape the place you grew up in, especially if it’s a tiny spot. And you get out of here and you realise, actually, you know, things were pretty good there’. But he notes that people who leave remember the place as it was when they left, and maintain that image as their place. He says:

But the place keeps moving and is changing. What they’ve taken away is all they’ve got, so it sort of becomes this place that they’ve preserved in amber. I’ve seen some documentaries about Newfoundlanders in Fort McMurray and doing a Newfoundland Christmas in Fort McMurray. And it feels kind of false to me. I think it’s because of that sense that what they’ve taken away with them, if it ever was Newfoundland, isn’t Newfoundland anymore.

Writer and arts administrator Danielle Devereux (2012: n.p.) sees a similar psychology in people she knows who have moved away due to ‘economic exile’: ‘This idea of the rock as a stable idea ... when I go home things will be good and stable and that’s where I belong. Of course, no place is that static. But because it’s physically removed, [the rock] works as a metaphor’. For Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.),

leaving ‘is always the story of Newfoundlanders—people who come to stay and people who leave and people who come back. I know people who desperately want to come back and can’t’.

Francoise Enguehard (2012: n.p.) notes that most young people in St Pierre et Miquelon go to France for their educations. ‘Let’s face it’, she says, ‘if you want to become a lawyer, you won’t do much, setting up a practice in St Pierre. If you’re a physician it’s the same. A lot of people leave—young people leave to get an education, but don’t come back’.

The story is similar in Tasmania. Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) experienced the pull of leaving as part of the ‘teenage discourse: that you should leave’. But she knew that even if she left, she would not be gone forever:

I thought that I was part of a transitional generation that was moving away from those ideas. But certainly when I went through school everybody’s ambition was either to go to Melbourne or London—that was where it was at. I went to Western Australia because it wasn’t Melbourne or London. I just wanted to do something a bit different. Whether that was relevant or not, I don’t know. But I always knew I’d come back, it was always a question of how long I was going for, not that I was going for good.

For David Keeling (2011: n.p.), the mainland meant more opportunities, particularly in sport: ‘Growing up, all our best footballers went to the mainland. I mean, you were really conscious of that. And that was kind of like a test—if you were any good, you’d end up there’. But he is also aware that time spent away is essential for one’s creativity, that while you are away ‘you think more powerfully, everything’s crystallized about where you came from. And then when you come back it’s followed by this fantastic time of energy’.

While travel opens up new opportunities, it can also affect your relationships with those who have not left the island. Louise Oxley (2011a: n.p.) found her year studying in France was invaluable in finding her own identity. She calls it a ‘major breaking out of the islandness, and all the things I associated with being home’. In France, where she was speaking another language, in a much larger community, she

felt she could be anonymous. She says, ‘I wasn’t one of the Hawker girls anymore. I could reinvent myself’. Coming home is not always as seamless as one might hope, however. Unlike Michael Crummey’s experience, Oxley felt the sting of coming home. She felt that for a number of reasons she was not readily accepted, but fundamentally she had been changed by her time away:

I think I lost a lot of friendships actually coming back. I talked to people that I used to know, but the only things I had to talk about were things outside of Tasmania. And there was a certain kind of embarrassment, or I felt that people thought I was big-noting a bit, or boasting because I’d spent this time in Europe or Britain and they didn’t actually want to know about that. It dismayed me a bit. It made me feel a bit alienated. I think I didn’t re-establish contact with a lot of friends, and I still haven’t, because I had that feeling that I couldn’t talk about anything anymore that belonged at home.

Although Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.) traveled extensively in his younger years, he is now quite content to stay home with his family and make art:

It seems to be necessary for a lot of people not to go crazy. On the other hand, I often think I’m also very tied to place because I’m a gardener and I have animals. If I go away for three days, I get anxious about making sure the animals are going to survive. Because it’d be just dreadful to come back and find all your chooks dead. I often think to myself, if somebody said, you can never leave the island again, I sort of think I wouldn’t mind that in a way.

Newfoundland’s Doug House (2012: n.p.) notes that the strength of his Newfoundland identity changed over time. Although he had never thought about being a Newfoundlander when he was young, when he went to Europe, ‘people would identify me as a Canadian. And I had never thought much about myself as a Canadian before. You don’t want to get mistaken for an American, right, so I became a Canadian’. But over the years of being away, first to study at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec (graduating with his PhD in 1972), and then to teach at University of Calgary, Alberta, he became increasingly interested in the place he was from. He credits a ‘Newfie joke’ as one of the turning points in ‘becoming a Newfoundlander’:

When I went to Ontario I discovered this almost kind of anti-Newfoundland attitude that a lot of mainlanders had at the time. That made me even more of a Newfoundlander. I said, ‘Shag this. I’m just as good as you are. I don’t like to hear you talking about Newfie jokes’. Then we went to Calgary. I went to a party, and somebody said, ‘Oh, I heard this great Newfie joke’. Then he looked at me and he said, ‘You don’t mind, do you, Doug?’ And I said, ‘Yes, I really do mind!’ You couldn’t hear a pin drop. The whole room went totally quiet. Then somebody changed the topic, said, ‘You didn’t have a joke anyhow’. It was comments like that that made me more like a proud Newfoundlander.

House believes that just because you come from a place does not mean you know about it. After this incident, he started to read Newfoundland history, and when an opportunity arose to teach at Memorial University he took it, returning home to St John’s in 1975, where he taught a Newfoundland society and culture course for Educational Television (ETV), which was offered in various centres across the island. The job entailed interviewing figures such as Joseph Smallwood and Richard Cashin who had been integral to Newfoundland’s Confederation story. House credits those incidents and the job opportunity for ‘becoming a Newfoundlander’, even though he was born and raised in Newfoundland. He says:

I’ve had a few opportunities to leave and go somewhere else, but I always felt that I had this sense of loyalty, that whatever I’m able to do in terms of contributing to the development of a place, I wanted it to be this place. I could have gone to Nova Scotia ... to McGill ... I just felt, if I’m going to make a contribution somewhere, I want to make it here. So I guess that makes me a Newfoundlander.

5.8 *Island time*

To describe islands as ‘places out of time’ (Edmond & Smith, 2003: 8) carries both positives and negatives. On the negative side, islands can be thought to be ‘behind the times’ or ‘lost in time’, implying that they are, perhaps, ‘sites of cultural stagnation ... damagingly cut off from modernity rather than a utopian alternative to it’ (Edmond & Smith, 2003: 8). But, as many an island tourism marketer knows, this ‘timeless’ quality is often what people are seeking when they go to an island, to get

away from the tyranny of clocks and scheduling, to slow down and relax, and live for a while on ‘island time’. Newfoundland’s tourism marketers urge visitors to come to Newfoundland in order to ‘step back in time’. In so doing, marketers are suggesting that Newfoundland can take you back to an earlier era; television commercials with heavy colour saturation featuring fishing boats and lighthouses, fiddle music and dancing, and a young freckle-faced girl running through waving fields of marram grass in slow motion—a not-so-subliminal way, perhaps, of showing that time moves slower on the island. In Tasmania, Danielle Wood (2008: 157) experiences her island as ‘exist[ing] somewhere between the present and the past’, marketed with ‘heritage buildings, history, and ancient natural settings’ photographed in ‘golden late-afternoon light’, itself a ‘between time, occurring at the cusp of day and night’. Painting an island and its heritage buildings in a golden glow evokes feelings of nostalgia, inviting you back to a simpler, more carefree time, perhaps childhood, when you did not carry the responsibilities of day-to-day existence and summer vacation seemed to last an eternity. (We will return to the theme of marketing islands in Chapter 9.)

The experience of ‘island time’ is one in which hours and minutes seem to go by more slowly. There are different reasons for this, as the artists I spoke to attest. For instance, when Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.) travels to Bruny Island, which she can see across the D’Entrecasteaux Channel from the front window of her house, she feels a difference in how time manifests. She says:

I think the sense that it’s just across there and it’s another island ... is really important. It has to do with its islandness, and that it’s smaller, and that it’s much harder to get to. And when you’re on it, it’s incredibly beautiful. Time slows down. I think the smaller the island, the stronger the sense that time disappears and you’re much more a part of that place. Whereas if I go to the mainland [Australia], I don’t feel that I belong there. I feel it’s much faster, and that sense of time is much stronger.

John Steffler (2013: n.p.) experienced a similar sensation of time stretching on an island in Greece, where he lived for a year. He found that when it came time to leave, he was deeply affected:

To my surprise, as the ferry was pulling away from the dock, I broke down crying. I’d never had an experience like that and it surprised me. I wanted to stay there forever. I kind of felt as though ... if I could have stayed there ... I would have lived a life seeming to be three or four times as long. It was like time was so much slower, that what happened in that one year felt to me like a decade in my normal life. It was so rich.

Even though both Eberhard and Steffler live (or, in the case of Steffler, lived) on larger islands (Tasmania and Newfoundland, respectively), they speak from the point of view of writers visiting smaller islands, spending time away from their regular lives and routines. In this case, perhaps their experiences are more like vacationers who feel the contrast between their lives on a mainland and lives on an island; or maybe not, since they are both artists who are, I expect, more attuned to paying attention to intangibles such as time and place in order to create their art.

Corroborating that supposition is John Cameron (2008: n.p.), a permanent resident of Bruny Island, who definitely agrees that time on an island *is* different. He attributes this to deep time, and how we are able to be more in tune with a place like a small island, where life is sometimes stripped to its essentials:

To inhabit this place is to inhabit the various time scales that are at work here, from hundreds of millions of years down to hours, minutes, and seconds. This manner of seeing requires imagining the real—giving more emotional attention to discovering what has already transpired and what is likely to occur. This manner of seeing means living in ‘deep time’ as well as in ‘deep present’.

When you are firmly on the island, with no plans to leave, you can feel the slow pace of island time, can live firmly in the ‘deep present’, mindful of your surroundings and the experiences of living in tune with the rhythms of the land and the tides. As Fogo Island’s Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.) says, ‘the water is our clock’. Writes Philip Vannini (2012: 109), in his book-length study of the effects of ferries on Canada’s west-coast islands:

Experience-based evidence of island time abounds. From a more relaxed attitude toward everyday routines and a slower pace of work, to a less hurried disposition towards interacting with others, the ability to make time for the

appreciation of nature and its rhythms, and a sharp appreciation for peace and quiet, the feel of island time is everywhere.

But if you have to travel to or from an island, island time can also be governed by outside rhythms dictated by ferry schedules. And, as in the case of Herm Island, five kilometres off the coast of Guernsey, even the ferry dock you use depends on the tide: at high tide you can leave from 'Weighbridge' or 'Inter-Island Quay' in front of the White House Hotel (which boasts ‘no telephones, televisions or clocks’), while at low tide you must walk five hundred metres south to ‘Cambridge Steps’. Writes Vannini (2012: 109): ‘Ferries play a key role in the process of moving islanders and coasters out of urban time. They help in slowing down the pace of the communities they serve and reducing their permeability to outside speeds’. By ‘reducing permeability to outside speeds’, the ferry itself is yet another protection from, or barrier against, the mainland.

Ferry schedules provide a rhythm that binds islanders together, from setting your clock by the blast of the ferry horn to knowing that the boat has arrived because of the long string of traffic you encounter on the road. As Vannini writes, ‘being in time brings a sense of harmony to islanders ...’ (2012: 116). The predictability of the schedule produces ‘repetitive experiences, embedding their schedules in the lives of individuals and in the histories of communities. Through this process of embedding, individual routines become synchronized and people get “in time” with one another, becoming “emplaced”’ (115). Emplacing serves to reinforce one’s sense of belonging, to bind islanders not only to one another, but to their island.

Islanders weave in and out of island and mainland time as necessary, but just how successfully one weaves in and out is another story. One island resident (in Vannini 2012: 108) put it this way:

If you’re on island time it’s like you’ve slowed down and moved to the side of the highway, but you know that sooner or later you need to get back on the highway, even if only for a short trip, and merging back onto it means you’re bound to crash hard. No man is an island, not even an island is an island.

By saying, ‘not even an island is an island’ because ‘you’re bound to crash hard’ when you get back onto ‘the highway’, this islander gives away his bias, believing that one cannot escape the mainstream; that being on an island is an opportunity to step away from the real world, for a while only. For others, as Vannini (2012: 116) notes, ‘being out of time from the city and the temporal regimes of the mainland causes great affective shocks to islanders and coasters every time they need to be in the city’. These people are firmly ensconced on the island; being at ‘the side of the highway’ is their preferred option.

The length of time one lives on an island, the size of an island, and how far removed the island is from the mainland (‘further out of time’) can all affect one’s sense of time, and one’s sense of islandness. Writes Vannini (2012: 123):

By cultivating duration—that is, by doing things such as catching the ferry over and over—not only does an individual acquire a stronger social identity as a local, but a community with a high number of long-time residents also acquires a stronger status as an island. This is one of the reasons why places like Vancouver Island feel ‘less of an island’—as one informant put it—‘than places where island time is more vivid.’ On Vancouver Island ‘it feels as though every other person is in transit, somehow, whereas on many of the smaller islands more people have committed to living there longer’ ... As unique communities settle on the regularity of their distinct habits and rituals, a deeper awareness of local time follows ...

Island time, then, is another defining trait of islandness, and is part of the psychology of islandness.³⁸ Islands sometimes feel as if they are ‘out of time’, a throwback to an earlier era when life was simpler, slower. In the case of Newfoundland, which has its own time zone (a half-hour’s difference from mainland Canada), the island is marketed as such to tourists, since ‘simple lifestyle’ and ‘slower pace’ are deemed marketable in the fast-paced, modern-day, mainstream world. And, sometimes, time

³⁸ The topic of island time is worthy of a deeper, more formal exploration, particularly in relation to postmodern perceptions of time. See Ermarth, E. D. (1992) *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

does seem to pass more slowly on an island, particularly for vacationers and artists who value living mindfully, with a strong connection to nature and place. On an island, one can strip down to essentials and just ‘be’ in a world of ‘do’. The boundedness of the island serves to intensify the experience; and like the quality of island light found in so many television and Internet advertisements that market islands, time somehow seems more full, more saturated.

5.9 Concluding thoughts

*from ‘Wayne Johnston talks about the weather’
(for Wayne Johnston)*

...
You know that song,
‘Thank God we’re surrounded by water’?
I really don’t like being surrounded by water.

To tell you the truth,
I’ve never liked the ocean.
You know how they used to talk about computers
not being user-friendly?
That’s how I feel about the ocean.

All you could do was look at it.
It was too damn cold to swim in.
And there was no other side to it.
It didn’t seem to lead anywhere.

I used to think there was no more forlorn a sight
than to see a ship leave St John’s Harbour
all alone at twilight
and head out into that abyss.

The sea has never been friendly to man. At most it has been the accomplice of
human restlessness.

—Joseph Conrad

In the preceding chapter, I have explored the psychologies of islandness—boundedness, connectedness, and the interplay between the two. I make an analogy between the skin of the body and the walls of a house, the bounds of the shore and the form of a poem, in order to demonstrate the intimacy one feels on an island. I

look at how islands can leave their imprint early on in life, and/or capture you as an adult. And I look at how being bounded and connected affect time. In sum, I have tried to articulate why people are so fascinated by islands, both as vacation destination and as home, or why Péron (2004: 328) says: ‘Here, things are different’. In the next chapter I explore how the psychologies of islandness in these various manifestations translate into artistic expression.

Chapter 6 Inspiring islands

*from 'So it begins at Hastings Bay'
(for Don and Frances Kay)*

...
*A faint sheen of sound nuzzles your ear and
the bay becomes your staff
the water pocks your notes*

*The wind's tendrils the stems
and its gusts the flags*

*the sustain pedal the silver
that holds it all together
to make this little dance of rain for flute*

Making art on and about islands is as pervasive as the winds and tides that define them. Dating back to ancient times—from Homer's *The Odyssey* and Plato's *Atlantis* to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*—island narratives are integral to the world's literary canon. Painters and photographers find their muse there, too, utilising the peculiarities of island light to shape their vision and hone colour and shadow. Musicians and singers, actors and storytellers, fill empty spaces with music and stories—sometimes in interminably long, island-bound winters and springs, or perhaps in monsoon seasons. Artists find islands particularly attractive for their inward journeys to creativity—free from the distractions of certain kinds of everyday world elsewhere, and find that living in tune with the rhythms of the island brings a depth to their lives which they might not experience in those other elsewhere. They may find islands to be '*tabulae rasae*: potential laboratories for any conceivable human project' (Baldacchino, 2006: 5). Or, perhaps, as Newfoundland poet John Steffler writes, they may think of islands as a 'blunt place ... where excuses stop' (Steffler, 1985: 9). With days and hours and minutes tuned to inner journeys, an artist can focus on making art.

On islands artists often connect with other entities—geographically, psychically, spiritually, and emotionally—in ways different from their experiences of connection in other spaces: the creative spirit finds resonance in being islanded. While some

artists take their inspiration from the ocean as metaphor for the subconscious or hinterland for creativity and the imagination, a symbol for restlessness and changeability, or the religious or spiritual (discussed in Chapter 7), others tap into an energy or dynamism that comes from living on the edge. Many take their inspiration from liminal spaces found at the shore and in their interactions with them. And, sometimes, to be on a physical island often makes real and everyday the image of the lonely artist making art in his or her garret, who yet may feel part of something larger. Says Tasmanian painter Richard Wastell (2011: n.p.), ‘the artistic community is small enough here that I’ve always thought there were these really amazing opportunities to come together and do something—not as usual in big cities where people are locked into their own fields’. While artistic collaborations can and do take place in cities, often the island’s scale and bounded close-knit communities allow for synergies that might not be found as easily in a mainland community. Part of the dynamic, always, is the place of the ocean.

While the previous chapter explored the psychological underpinnings of islandness, this chapter examines some of the ways in which artists express that islandness through their art. It looks at how the ocean and the edge inspire creativity; how home and homesickness feed the creative spirit; and how the islands’ rich ‘narrative cartographies’ offer scope for artistic interpretation and storytelling.

6.1 Ocean as inspiration

*from Lisa’s sense of water
(for Lisa Moore)*

*Summers around the bay
there’s a different sense of time, of beauty
and enough quiet to sort of settle
dig deep*

*The rhythm of the North Atlantic pounds her senses
how it works frightens her
the power of it, the fragility of it, the mystery of it
the unimaginability of eighty-four men
dying out there with nothing*

But she takes it as the gift it is

For many, there is nothing so potent as the ocean and the shore to engender creativity.³⁹ In light of Tuan's (1971) ideas about geography being a mirror for humanity, as explored in Chapter 5, in what ways and to what effects do artists reflect their physical space through their art? I contend that any such reflection will sometimes be overt—such as when art engages with the sea and the coast, or stories or songs set there. Or sometimes it can be covert: one must seek 'between the cracks' for subtextual clues such as the sound of the wind or play of the light; the way lives are governed by the rhythm of the tides or the ferocity of weather; or the manner in which people exhibit the psychologies of islandness. Particularly in the case of stories, there is often a causal effect: if you work your way back a few steps, you can find that the ocean is at the root of the phenomenon being expressed artistically.

For Newfoundland's Françoise Enguehard (2012: n.p.), living on an island means that 'everything is new every day, colours are never the same. It's a canvas for those who paint, and for those who write: let your mind go, eyes roam over the ocean, and imagine absolutely whatever you want'. Vancouver Island's Joanna Streetly (2013: n.p) finds the idea of living 'in a small place, where you can know all the boundaries' inspiring. For her, there is 'that element of surprise, because of that constant motion of the sea, changing the landscape and bringing in things from far away. That is the constant that feeds my creativity'. Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.) looks out from Tinderbox on the 'big island' of Tasmania to the much smaller Bruny Island across the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. She writes about the sea as a place of imagination and dreams, and how 'setting out is really important to who we are as human beings'. But, echoing Porteous' words, 'home as the territorial core' (discussed in Chapter 5), Eberhard says, 'there's the sense that this is where I can dream. I can set out, but I'm anchored here'.

Craig Benson (2013: n.p.), who lives on Piers Island, off the south coast of Vancouver Island, spends significant periods of time at the shore, capturing the ebb and flow of the water in his sculptures: 'The beach is magic, the changingness of it.

³⁹ Indeed, I do my clearest thinking when I am walking what Prince Edward Island poet Milton Acorn (2002) calls the 'wave-lined edge of home' (53).

The way the sea delivers things, there's so much happening, so much bird and sea life. The blend of water and land—the blend where we all come from'. His feel for the ocean is evident in his carvings of water creatures: the movement of the water is reflected in their sinuous movement. He feels an indescribable connection to 'where we all come from'—the sea—with the result that 'the ocean opens my soul. It opens me as a human. It's just good for well-being'. Now he takes delight in taking his granddaughter down to the shore to watch young eyes discover all its wonders, too.

Bruny Island's Victoria King (2011: n.p.) finds inspiration from the Channel just outside her front door: 'I had a chair in the shed and I'd just sit there and just gaze out'. For years before coming to Bruny, King used 'shimmer' in her paintings, based on the effect of light on water. She says, 'there's something about shimmer and water. It can kind of lull you into this sense of contentment'. She notes that some Australian artists, particularly indigenous elders, use a crosshatching and dotting that can create shimmer, which she thinks has to do with 'the stunning effect: it's an act of power, intentionally done to create a certain effect on the beholder'. When people see the water, then, they are often 'calmed, numbed, lulled' into a state where you 'do not have to think about the cares of the day'. But now that she lives on Bruny Island, King finds her work is no longer about being calm: she finds herself in a storied relationship with her land and gives voice to it through her paintings and sculptures. The materials unearthed on the acreage she shares with John Cameron or that which is washed up on shore have become muses alongside another medium, pieces of driftwood that look like birds, or that carry 'uncanny' traces of human presence. She says:

You get layers of paint that are peeling off—this thing about the futility of human existence, basically. Let's create a life, then all of a sudden it comes drifting along the shore from fifty kilometres down. There's something I find quite poignant about that—so the reason for picking up the weathered wood isn't just esthetic. There's something about the process of time actually being important.

King's studio is filled with hundreds of small birds and tall, totem-like figures made with hand tools from driftwood and found objects; a handful of feathers spurting

from a rusted water faucet; barbed wire twisted to make a boat or hanging like skeletal fingers from an old chain; a handcrafted book with paper made with thistles—all part of the story of the property that she and her husband call Blackstone.



Figure 6.1 - *Natural Resources*, by Victoria King (used with permission of the artist)

After King and Cameron bought Blackstone, they discovered that the adjacent land had special historic significance: the remains of an earthen ‘sod hut’, from which George Augustus Robinson set out on his ‘Friendly Mission’ to round up the

Aboriginal population in the 1830s.⁴⁰ Through a series of coincidences that they can only call ‘serendipity’, King and Cameron were able to purchase that property, too, and set about ensuring it would be given special designation by Heritage Tasmania. She says: ‘Something is being articulated through this place. My artwork is very particular to Blackstone, and particular to ... my own personal history. I feel like I can be a channel for the pain and betrayal felt by the indigenous Nuenone people who were once custodians of this land’. One of the results of this ‘channelling’ is a shallow enamel bowl, ‘much eaten away. I’ve created a base for it out of barbed wire, but it seemed like a bowl to collect tears in, tears of shame’—in particular, shame for the barbarous ways European settlers treated the Aboriginal people (to be explored later in this chapter). Again, the medium is the message: ‘Even when I’m angry, it’s just the pleasure of working with the materials and the play and the *not* thinking, about allowing the content of what I’m surrounded with here’. King often feels as if she is ‘channelling’ the place and its history through her art. The fact that she is located on ‘the Channel’ is not lost on her; she has been aware of the play on words since her arrival.

King says that after living and making art in the US, England, and mainland Australia, the art she makes on Bruny Island is stripped down to the bones and integrated into her life: ‘The content is not separate from myself. Within each of my bird sculptures and bird-women figures there is a story, where I’m not the centre, but I’m part of it’. Like many artists, King attempts through her art to confront the injustices humans have perpetrated on the land, as well as to each other. She gives voice to the land—or, in the language of Goethean science (described in S. 6.2 and in Appendix C), being of service to it in order to bring the stories to the fore.

⁴⁰ George Augustus Robinson’s ‘Friendly Mission’ was an attempt by Governor George Arthur of Van Diemen’s Land (now Tasmania) to relocate, between 1832 and 1835, the Aborigines to Flinders Island peacefully and under Robinson’s protection. But, as time would tell, this was anything but ‘friendly’; writes historian James Boyce (2010: 296): ‘The colonial government from 1832 to 1838 ethnically cleansed the western half of Van Diemen’s Land and then callously left the exiled people to their fate. The black hole of Tasmanian history is not the violence between white settlers and the Aborigines—a well-recorded and much-discussed aspect of the British conquest—but the government-sponsored ethnic clearances which followed it’.

Tasmanian writer Louise Oxley (2011a: n.p.) also finds watery and coastal imagery prevalent in her work. She alludes to the ocean in her poem ‘Night, Connelly’s Marsh’ (2005: 15): ‘I’ll wait here for a while / between breaths / spanning tides’; and in ‘The Dragon’s Nose’: ‘I watched the ocean / sloppy and unstoppable / push into the crevice and tongue the overhang’ (2008: 17). Oxley says she finds herself constantly returning to the image, which does not surprise her since she is an ‘island person’:

Being on the edge of the elements, or between elements ... you stand on the coast and you’re on solid land, and you look over the liquid, over somewhere where you can’t go, or only in certain circumstances. If you step into it, it’s a completely different element. You have to be able to swim or breathe underwater or be a fish or a bird. It is almost a bit obsessive in a way. I might start out to write about something else, but it often comes back in.

For Oxley and others, the ocean is the imagination’s hinterland, from which they draw inspiration like proverbial water from a well. Says Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.), ‘I’m one of those ones that sits down on the beach and just stares at it. I can look at the ocean til the cows come home’. At the same time, there is a certain allure when ‘there’s a sea on’: the sheer magnitude and power of a crashing ocean is dramatic. Says Doyle, ‘there’s nothing that I find more beautiful, more changeable. I just don’t know anything as exciting as the ocean. Ocean matters to me’.

From early on, Don Kay (2011: n.p.) says, ‘without admitting it’, his music was influenced by being in Tasmania. His musical inspiration is informed by his response to the island as well as to water, even though he may not consciously create music about Tasmania: ‘The intervals that one chooses, the harmonies, the degree of consonance, dissonance, the colours, what’s blue, what’s red, very personal, you can’t prove it but you know that’s what you meant. And you can hear the difference’. He says that at first his titles were generic (e.g., ‘Sonata’), but he came to realise that the pieces were motivated from being in Tasmania, and in 1986 he gave his first local title to the piece, ‘Hastings Triptych’, when his wife Frances bought some land at Hastings, south of Hobart. He says:

It's sort of on the edge of remoteness. A very mountainous woody place. And it had a little house, a shack, on the Hastings Bay, which looked out across the wilderness to the southwest. Elevated, looking out at the bay. A very still, tranquil spot. When I went down there, I'd nearly always come back with a musical idea.

The ocean can often be a soothing, peaceful place. John Steffler (2013: n.p.) thinks this is one of the reasons 'retired and old people' like to sit on benches, gazing at the sea: 'Everybody's subliminal dream of retirement is to live somewhere on a coast and sit and look at the ocean. The ocean somehow seems like eternity or infinity. It kind of speaks of things that are beyond our control'. Taking inspiration from that which is 'beyond our control'—the mystical and sacred—is a complex idea further described in Chapter 7. But artists often find themselves situated at the edge. For Tasmanian painter David Keeling (2011: n.p.), the edge is 'a zone of speculation': 'You're thinking of what's ahead of you and what's behind you. And it's at once an image of promise, but it's an image of isolation as well'. His series, *Archipelago* (1992, 1998) and *Other Edens* (1998), capture coastal views and islands, and 'people really responded to those images for that reason. Images of an island further off ... paintings about water and islands and archipelagos'. One of his early paintings, *To the Island* (1989), created on his return from study on the mainland, is what David Hansen calls a 'celebratory painting' (2007: 11) depicting two people rowing to an island on a flat sea spotted with cloud reflections. The island is the shape of Maria Island off Tasmania's east coast, 'with its specific penal, industrial and touristic histories and monuments', but:

the floating rock represents the whole of the island state ... the painting flips back again to metaphor: the silos of the cement factory, the temple-like structure of a ruined lime kiln, the gable-roofed barracks structure, are based on actual buildings ... in a state where forestry is the major primary industry and a focus of political dispute, the load is shown to be excessive. Keeling's Maria-Tasmania is a dead island, stripped of all timber save for two trees on a cliff and a narrow tonsure of green on top of the mountain.

Keeling's paintings may capture a landscape, but they are 'thoroughly peopled landscapes, including those that do not include actual figures' (Timms, 2009: n.p.), carrying a political message of exploitation and degradation of landscape, 'the whole load of human perception and endeavour that the Earth has to bear' (Hansen, 2007: 11). Says Keeling, 'what I didn't want to do as a landscape painter is just reinforce stereotypes, and it's so easy to drop into the sublime or the spiritual, so I always had my ideas around landscape as the most politically contested space'.

For Rees Campbell (2011: n.p.), the shore is a 'treasure trove. It comes from both sides and you end up with these wonderful collectible things. The gifts that the natural world give us ... if you're only there to actually watch for them and pick them up'. Her book, *A Thousand Treasures, a Million Pleasures: The life and times of shells, crabs, and other beach creatures on the North West Coast of Tasmania* (2006), is an illustrated guide to the sea creatures and shells found on the shore at different tides, as well as a brief history of the 'original custodians', the Aborigines who lived in the coastal region, exploiting its bounty for their survival. Written primarily for children, the book includes a poem by Campbell (2006: n.p.) that describes the awe she feels for the shore and her powerful connection to the universe when she is there:

At lowest tide, alone
 in the grey half life of early morning
 I walked the sands of Montagu
 In perfect synchrony
 the quickening sun marked the path for my feet
 as the setting moon lit my trail behind
 And there, for just a moment
 I stood
 Right at the centre of the universe.

Over his nearly thirty-year career, Tasmania's Philip Wolfhagen has engaged with the ocean and the edge, with installations entitled *Surface Tension* (1998), *Bass Strait Definitive Nos 1 and 2* (2002), and *Third Lucid Interval* and *Fourth Lucid Interval* (both 2003). 'Faced with such apparent emptiness', Peter Timms (2005: 33) writes of

Surface Tension No. 3, ‘we are all at sea’. He compares the ‘featureless expanses of water’ to the Australian landscape, where there is, presumably, no focal point. Rather, argues Timms, the paintings ‘extend his vision into other territories, both geographic and artistic’, creating an ‘atmosphere of melancholy and loss, which captures the mood of our apprehensive time’.

Wolffhagen’s exhibition of paintings based on a twelve-day residency on Deal Island in Bass Strait in 2002 is called *Archipelago: A Work in Six Parts* (2003). Timms (2005: 35) calls the panoramic view west from Deal to Erith and Dover Islands ‘devotional’ in its atmosphere; and is ‘quite unapologetically, a narrative painting’:

Indeed, the whole mood of the painting progresses, left to right, from airily warm to storm-laden, the sky becoming progressively darker as it takes up more of the view. Only the south-facing cliffs of Erith, just beyond the narrow tidal isthmus that connects the two islands, are touched by sunlight. This delicately painted passage of silvery water flowing out of the shadows towards the open sea, is the focal point of the composition, offering, as it does, a strong hint of redemption.

This eliding of ocean imagery with spiritual redemption suggests the power of the ocean on its viewer and on its interpreter: the artist. However, a final example stems decidedly not *from* the ocean, but *because* of the ocean: the island surrounded by water offers safe haven. For Sheila Norgate (2013: n.p.) of Gabriola Island, being near the sea has little bearing on her art; her journey has been completely internal. She says, ‘I do not feel safe on the water, or in the water. It’s not something that pulls me, even though I am surrounded by water.’ Norgate uses the freedom she has found on the island to create paintings and collages that represent her own psychological and spiritual journey toward healing and wholeness. Until coming to Gabriola Island, fear, based in childhood trauma, was a defining characteristic of her life. She likes Gabriola Island because there are no ‘large predators’: ‘And I count men as predators in the city’. On Gabriola, she was able to let down her defences at the most visceral level. Some of her paintings engage with the landscape, but she says that most have nothing to do with geography: ‘Nature had me surrounded and I gave up peacefully’. She finds that many of the themes in her paintings engage with birds and migration

and flying; she feels that she has ‘migrated to home’. At the same time, her palette has become much greener, in many senses of the word: ‘There’s less competition for the eyes there. In the city we’re constantly surrounded by words and signs, and we read these things. On Gabriola there’s very little to catch the eye, only branches on the trees, waving in the breeze’. Norgate’s experience of the island is an internal one, providing her that security, that community, that platform from which to jump off and expand her horizons.

6.2 ‘Geopoetry’

*from ‘Beach ears’
(for John Cameron)*

*I ask about the footprints
that led me to your door
Etched in ochre sandstone
they look a bit like beach ears*

...

these giant footsteps running to the water
are the ecological footprint that tell me
the sea level is rising
and the shore is eroding

and the land is always listening

While some artists get their ideas from the ocean, others regard the land as muse. Three artists in particular find their inspiration in the geology of their islands: Don McKay in Newfoundland and John Cameron and Peter Adams in Tasmania. They express through their writing and sculpture a spiritual connection to the island that spans deep time. Indeed, Newfoundland poet McKay uses the term ‘geopoetry’, coined by geologist Harry Hess in the 1960s, to describe ‘the place where materialism and mysticism, those ancient enemies, finally come together, have a conversation in which each harkens to the other, then go out for a drink’ (McKay,

2011: 11). McKay's Griffin-Poetry-Prize-winning⁴¹ volume of poetry, *Strike/Slip* (2006) and his subsequent volume *Paradoxides* (2012) are inspired by his feelings of awe and wonder at Newfoundland's distinctive geologic history, where the earth's tectonic plates have collided to form the island. The island was 'formerly part of a micro-continent called Avalonia', writes McKay (2012: 81). 'During much of the Palaeozoic era Avalonia existed as a separate island in the middle of the Iapetus Ocean (the Atlantic's predecessor)'. On why it inspires his writing, he writes (2011: 19):

Such scientific reflections may serve to extend the condition of wonder from its peak epiphany into everyday existence. We might find it spreading from exceptional instances, like a trip to Mistaken Point [on Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula and site of some the planet's oldest fossils], to the nondescript rock in my backyard, which turns out to have travelled here from its birthplace in a volcano on the continent that became today's Africa.

Similarly, John Cameron (2011: n.p.) finds himself writing about the geology of his island—in particular, the ancient rock formations on his shore that are revealed by constant wave action. He points to a formation that looks like a dragon or lizard coming out of the rock on the shore, which he calls 'the guardian of the shoreline':

I suppose it could be called anthropomorphizing. And that's part of being an islander, not just identification ... it stimulates the imagination, it's not just a cognitive process. As well as thinking through logically all the things we can do to reduce our ecological footprint ... if we can imagine ourselves in different relationship with place, and with the island, that's an important step. If we can get our imaginations engaged, it works at a whole other level.

⁴¹ The Griffin Poetry Prize (Griffin Trust, 2014: n.p.) is 'the world's largest prize for a first edition single collection of poetry written in, or translated into English, from any country in the world', awarded each year to both a Canadian and international book of poetry.

For Cameron, this ‘whole other level’ is through the perspective of Goethean science (Cameron, 2005). Instead of the Western science model of observation, experimentation, and prediction, Cameron maintains that by opening oneself up to the phenomenon and using imagination and feeling as well as the senses and observation, it is possible to grasp something about the essential nature of the phenomenon, and then, in the final stage, having been given the gift of the phenomenon’s presence, determining how to be of service to it. (For Cameron’s more detailed explanation of Goethean Science and how it might be applied to an island, see Appendix C.) Cameron says that responding to and writing about place is an ‘essential meaning-making process’:

The lovely thing about Goethean science, it’s not like you leave your logical mind at the door and simply just open up poetically, because I think there’s great richness in bringing the best of western mainstream science and the best of the poetic imagination together. But there is [such] a wonderful presence about rocks that I can’t call them inanimate anymore.

Like McKay and Cameron, Peter Adams (2011: n.p.) of Tasmania is attracted to the vast age of Tasmania, to something so primal and present in the land that he felt compelled to ‘attach’ himself to it. He finds much of his inspiration in his surroundings (while sometimes borrowing from Greek mythology), creating wood sculptures from native Tasmanian wood and integrating them with materials found on his land at Roaring Beach, on the southwest coast of the island. His piece, *Ovum d’Aphrodite*, comprises a stone representing Aphrodite, the goddess of fertility, love, and beauty, as a fertilized egg, nestled in a scallop shell carved out of ancient Huon pine. The story that Adams references here is the Greek myth of Cronus, the youngest son of the Earth goddess Gaia, who castrated his father Uranus and tossed the genitals into the ocean. Aphrodite was born of the sea foam that resulted. Adams’ intention was ‘to bring an awareness of eros, of love and beauty, feeling and intuition, mystery and passion back into our overly masculine perception of the world’.



Figure 6.2 – *Ovum d'Aphrodite*, by Peter Adams (used with permission of the artist)

In a blog entry, he (2011b: n.p.) writes:

Ultimately, the goal—if there is a goal—is to provide a means, to allow people, including myself, to find a way to love this earth. What I’m ultimately after is that we don’t destroy this earth. These old stories, although much forgotten, are still a part of us. They need to be remembered, made alive once again through the artist’s eyes, hands and heart and given a new life; a new birth, so to speak.

That these three artists find inspiration in the deep time of islands on opposite sides of the globe is hardly surprising given their interest in plate tectonics and the poetic possibilities that arise when you imagine the plates themselves being joined. By choosing to live on these islands, and being open to these energies of connection, McKay, Cameron, and Adams find inspiration and depth that translates into their artistic expression.

6.3 Art from home—and from missing home

*from ‘Part of the conversation
(for Danielle Wood)*

Miserably homesick, unbearably hot

*you cooled yourself with stories of home
where you could walk the streets with your mother and uncles
who'd known everyone since they were children
who was married to who and
who was not married to who anymore.*

Soaked in this big community memory
with the idea that what you do
will never go away.
Not very many things happen that too many people are outside of.
When the bridge fell down, everybody knew somebody
who was either on the bridge, or got stuck in traffic.

*But you could not bear being out of earshot
that home was going on without you.*

Art that is inspired by 'home' is not particular to islands. However, since education and employment opportunities on islands are often limited, migration tends to be part of the island condition: islands are 'invariably characterized by migration' (Connell, 2007: 455). On islands, people are always coming and going, eliciting a range of emotions that fuel art and literature in both Tasmania and Newfoundland. Indeed, writes Bernice Morgan in her novel *Waiting for Time* (1994: 223), 'The same week Shirley and Rachel Jane took off for parts unknown. "Parts unknown", Selina sighs and repeats the phrase, "must be the permanent address of Newfoundlanders"'.

First, then, is 'home'. Tasmania's David Keeling (2011: n.p.) says that a deep connection to place and home is the inspiration for many of his paintings: 'Whenever I can't sleep, I just think of Kelso, going round the West Head, and that usually puts me back to sleep'. He notes that because the house had been left to his wife, he felt less connected to it than she did. He says, 'I never really felt that it was me ... so it was important that I started developing those pictures from West Head, because that planted me there, in a deeper way'. He continues:

I remember this one day, it was really hot, we were on this beach, had been for a swim, and there was no one else around. Suddenly this hang glider came up over the sand dunes. It was just the most surreal, weird moment. And then he went. And then we walked along and we found a midden. I think that sort of made my connection much deeper to that place.

Even though Kelso was his wife's family's home, he has been able to make it his home, too, as a place where Relph (1976: 43) says we may have had 'particularly moving experiences'. By having these 'surreal' experiences, Keeling is now making his own stories in Kelso, which he then translates into art. In so doing, Keeling has, in a way, painted himself into the story of the place, and into Kelso itself—creating what Lopez (1996: 12) calls 'an intimate reciprocal relationship that will feed you in some way'. (This 'painting' oneself into a place as a way of belonging is further explored in Chapter 8.)

Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.), too, feels connected 'like an umbilical cord' to a particular place: the Great Western Tiers, near where he grew up. He entitled his 2004 show *The Inner Edge*, a play on words in an attempt to elicit different meanings for viewers as well as to 'return to the edge of the plateau and the farming country, and my inner edge'. Debra Major (2004: n.p.), in a review of *The Inner Edge*, alludes to the circularity of an island having a subconscious impact on Tasmanian artists such as Wolfhagen:

What is it about Tasmania that has induced artists to produce works with such adherence to the circularity of form of both earth and island? From Henry Hellyer's sketch of the view from Mt Valentine's Peak made on 15 February 1827, though to Bea Maddock's *Terra Spiritus* (1993–98), artists working in Tasmania have led their audiences on circumnavigations both physical and of the mind. Philip Wolfhagen, in this exhibition, circles the land as it circles him, content to be captured by its resonance that is one of his own experience.

The words, 'The Inner Edge', resonate with boundedness—both physical and psychological. Circumnavigating the boundaries and portraying that journey through art is a way that island artists illustrate their experiences of island place, and demonstrate the deep emotional connection they have forged.

Tasmania's waterscapes and landscapes evoke in Don Kay (2011: n.p.) an artistic response that did not occur while teaching in Victoria, nor when he studied in England. Rather, it was particular to his home: Tasmania:

Its particular landscape-colour combinations, its waterways and mountains, are what appeal to me. I've got a feeling that because it is an island— autonomous, self-sufficient—it makes my response to it stronger than if it was part of a larger land mass. When I went to [my wife's] home on the English border in 1986–7, she said, 'are you going to make something in response to my home spot?' Nothing stirred me to do so. So it's a very personal response to this island. I felt a mission to sort of respond here. And it was natural; it wasn't a forced thing.

That Kay's response to the island was 'stronger than if it was part of a larger land mass' is indicative of people's ability to bond powerfully to the discrete, 'self-sufficient' geographies that they hold clearly in their imaginations (to be elaborated in Chapter 8).

With their distinctive water-bound geographies, islands are also held clearly in other artists' memories. Thinking of home when one is away can be a powerful muse— particularly when homesick. Emotions become heightened as waves of nostalgia and loss overwhelm. Remembering home and creating images of home can help to soothe the homesick spirit. Tasmania's Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) speaks about how she assuaged her homesickness by writing her novel, *The Alphabet of Light and Dark* (2003), in a 'corrugated iron shed' in Broome, Western Australia. 'I was miserably homesick and unbearably hot. I found that I could write probably more passionately about Tasmania while there because I was missing it so terribly and I needed it, so I could write it for myself'. Wood was writing out of her need to recreate home. Similarly, Philip Wolfhagen's (2011: n.p.) first year at Sydney College of the Arts on the mainland was spent painting Mt. Wellington—copying a photograph he had taken before he left of the 'sea breeze cloud building on the mountain':

It did a lot of good. It made me feel better. I also think it made the work interesting, too, because it was laden with so much emotional content. I think that probably my work still has that quality, of trying to imbue in the landscape. And partially through the physical nature of the way I paint, with beeswax. And that also is a thing that comes through my experience of beekeeping. It's all interlocked.

The creative value conferred by distance comes through prominently in interviews. Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.) sees the need sometimes to be able to write more clearly from a distance, drawing on the homesickness she feels when she is away. She says her poem, ‘Notes from the Black Sea’ (2003: 88), is about exile. With lines such as ‘Banishment is a harsh word’ and ‘If I had a boat / and the strength to sail it / I would find my way back home’, the poem is ‘triggered by being in Canberra, thinking about Tasmania. I think sometimes you do need distance to be able to write about the place, or anything’.

When Louise Oxley (2011a: n.p.) moved to mainland Australia (also to Canberra), she, too, was homesick for the sea that had been so imprinted on her from a young age:

I just remember that I was away from the sea, and the seaweed and the rocks and the smells of the sea, and the foam. I’d go to Lake Burley Griffin [an artificial lake in the centre of Canberra] to sort of watch the little ripples of water lapping against the nondescript sort of rocks and the mud, and there was only a smell of fresh water and it was awful. I wanted that to be the sea.

Her poem, ‘Lagging Behind’ (2005: 10), engages with those emotions triggered by her strong connection to the land and the sea. She writes: ‘Now when I walk in tartan, a shell in my pocket, / always furled ready, replaces the rhythm of sucking. / So that stranded inland, I can turn and turn it back’. As she explains (2011: n.p.):

That was a poem written in Canberra when I was feeling very homesick for the coast. And I did have an old coat that had a little shell, a spiral one, in the pocket. My son had a paper route and I would walk with him, and just turn the shell. It kind of made me feel as if I was closer to it.

To equate stroking the shell with a baby’s ‘rhythm of sucking’ illustrates the depth of her homesickness, and the lengths she would go to soothe herself.

As a young woman, Françoise Enguehard (2012: n.p.) moved from St Pierre et Miquelon to the island of Newfoundland, but finds herself writing extensively—if not exclusively—about the island of her birth: ‘Sometimes it’s not even about remembering. It comes back to you in waves. Things that obviously you

remembered, but did not know I had remembered’. She refers to a colleague from St Pierre who has experienced a similar feeling, even while living in Paris: ‘So far, everything he’s written has been about St Pierre. Islandness. Leaving. [He] always says that he could not have written about St Pierre in St Pierre—he had to leave in order to do it. And I think he may be right’. Even though she ‘never thought [she] was going to write only about “island”’, Enguehard’s adult novels have both been about St Pierre, the first based on the history of her great-grandparents and the second on a doctor who had taken photographs there. She says, ‘I don’t think I could write a story that was set in the Alps. I don’t think I’d have any reference’.

Tasmania’s Richard Wastell (2011: n.p.) sees the benefits to his own work of spending time off-island, ‘to have separation in order to understand new things about it’. But while in the desert landscape of Alice Springs, he says he felt like ‘a ghost moving through it—no roots there—didn’t even know which way the wind was blowing’, and found that he could not work in that landscape. For Wastell, the familiarity of home, and the boundedness of home, are important factors in grounding his art in Tasmania. He says:

I am always struck by its wildness. When I drive home from the airport—past hills that are tangled, messy scrub, unruly, a raw power ... I think it’s a real human want to just know where your boundaries are—where one thing starts and another ends. A human necessity really. I don’t feel I could work anywhere else. I could, but I’d be making work of this place, from memory—I have enough to work for the rest of my life. I could work from my house, and never go out. I’d be insane, but I could do it.

Making the decision to leave or stay on one’s island is often agonizing, for both the person who is leaving and those who are being left. Tasmanian author Richard Flanagan’s novel, *Death of a River Guide* (1994), includes one of the most moving evocations of the leaving/staying discourse I have come across in Newfoundland and Tasmanian literature. The main character, Aljaz Cosini, is in a Hobart bar, listening to an Aboriginal singer whose bandmate’s sister has left Tasmania ‘[b]ecause she reckoned Tassie a shithole ... Because she reckoned there was no hope here’ (257). Aljaz listens to the singer ‘singing out of himself and out of his soul and out of a

memory of loss so big and so deep and so hurting that it could not be seen or described but only screamed about' (257). The narrator describes the loss: of trees, of emu and wallaby and tigers, and how 'scallops and the abalone and the crayfish became few and were in consequence no longer the food of the poor but the waste of the rich' ... the loss of land and blackfellas; the loss of convicts' hope of freedom, or making better lives for themselves; the loss of truth as lies were told to gloss over the truth of what had happened to make Van Diemen's Land "a hell" (258–9); dark deeds like sodomy and cannibalism, 'syphilis and sadness and fear and madness and loss' (260); loss when 'children denied their parents and invented new lineages of respectable free settlers to replace the true genealogy of shame' (260). Flanagan (1994: 260) writes:

No one spoke. No one spoke. For a century nothing was heard. Even the writers and poets were mute to their own world. If possible they left, though with an insistent phrase sounding in their ears that would never depart.

If you leave you can never be free.

Ticket-of-leave men⁴² in their hearts, granted a pass permitting travel but never the freedom to leave, wherever their bodies ran their souls remained forever shackled to the strange mountainous island of horrors at the end of the world. And now Shag's guitar is back where it began, except now it is not merely a statement but a question and an accusation and a statement all bound together. Shag makes the strings shriek, because Shag wants so bad for his sister to be free, and he can only free them both by playing this dim terrible memory.

If you leave you can never be free.

⁴² A Ticket of Leave was 'a document given to convicts when granting them freedom to work and live within a given district of the colony before their sentence expired or they were pardoned' (Nelson & O'Donovan, 1999–2003: n.p.); the Ticket did not grant the convicts freedom; until they were pardoned (conditionally or absolutely), they were 'half-free' or 'paper men' (Newman, 2005: n.p.).

The song is a confession, an admission that when you leave you cannot escape what you have left behind—like Aljaz running away to the mainland to escape the pain of losing his infant daughter and subsequently his wife. By crossing the Bass Strait you cannot escape the psychological and emotional oppression that is the weight of the unspoken truth of Tasmanian history. Peter Conrad (1988: 232) has written a similar story:

It was the landscape inside me: the space where I spent my dreaming time. Back there I recognised the random objects which staked out my borders, the totems which still accompanied me ... The home you cannot return to you carry off with you: it lies down there at the bottom of the world, and of the sleeping, imagining mind.

But Cosini's mantra, '*if you leave you can never be free*', begs the question: can you be free if you stay? As writer Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) puts it, at least if you stay you can be 'part of the conversation', part of the voicing of stories and truths that have been buried for so long. And in the unearthing of story, in the reclaiming of the past—no matter how gruesome or shameful—you will be freer than if you had left, carrying the weight of the past—along with the guilt and shame you might feel for having been the one to desert.

Thus, island artists create powerful stories based on their strong connections to their islands as home, as well as out of the need to recreate home when they are homesick. Fiona Polack (2006: 93-4) notes that in both Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* and Richard Flanagan's *Death of a River Guide*, Newfoundland and Tasmania are 'encoded as quintessential homespaces ... writers became particularly intent on imagining them as places to which to return rather than from which to depart'. In Flanagan's case, he takes it to another level of pain: his characters miss home before they even leave. And, as established in Chapter 5, Wayne Johnston (1999: 236) says that early in his career he could only write by feeding 'off a homesickness that I need and that I hope is benign and will never go away ... and that someday it will break my heart'.

6.4 ‘Narrative cartographies’: Tasmania

*from ‘Necklace for the Sawyer’s Wife’
(for Victoria King)*

...
*and the story of sawyers rowing two black men and with Truganini watching
they push them over the side and when they reach out for help the sawyers
chop off their hands then rape her over and over as her husband—who-would-
have-been sinks beneath the skin of water*

flesh of sky.

...
*You bend barbed wire into fingers
gnarl the points into knuckle joints
hang hands from a leg-iron chain to make
a necklace for the sawyer’s wife.*

Just as the island landscape serves to inspire artists to express their islandness, so, too, do the stories of the islands. The histories of Newfoundland and Tasmania embrace events that serve as touchstones for these islands’ collective cultural memories, which have become ‘narrative cartographies’—stories about place in terms provided by Newfoundland’s Officer of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.). Indeed, Newfoundland has a rich storytelling or oral tradition, based on fairy tales, local ghost stories and legends, and such collections as the Brothers Grimm and European folktales. The tradition was sustained until as recently as the 1960s and 70s, when the introduction of television ended centuries of self-entertainment. Newfoundland’s Andy Jones (2012: n.p.), who has retold in new children’s picture books some of the ‘Jack Tales’ in modern-day settings, put it this way: ‘I guess it’s because we’re a bit behind this stuff can survive. The old traditions survived a little bit longer’. A sampling of these ‘narrative cartographies’, then, is highlighted in the following discussion, with some described in more detail in subsequent chapters.

In Tasmania, the early settlement as a penal colony—and the horror that came from the living conditions that led to the description ‘hell on earth’—became the subject matter of one of Tasmania’s earliest novels, Marcus Clarke’s *For the Term of His Natural Life*, published in 1874. The novel is based on the true-life story of the convict Alexander Pearce who, in order to survive, ate his companions after escaping

from Macquarie Island Penal Station. The novel pioneered what is now referred to as the Tasmanian Gothic tradition. In 2008, Director Michael James Rowland made the film *The Last Confession of Alexander Pearce*, and in 2009, Director Jonathan Auf Der Heide made *Van Diemen's Land*, both based on the same story. Richard Flanagan's novel *Death of a River Guide* (1999) includes elements of the story as well.

Another story is that of Sir John Franklin, who, along with his wife, Lady Jane, lived in Tasmania while he was governor from 1836 to 1843. While there, they adopted an Aboriginal child named Mathinna (1835–1852); this tragic tale of ill-fated attempts to 'civilise' the Aboriginal population became the subject matter for Bangarra Dance Company's ballet, *Mathinna* (2011). A painting of Mathinna in a red dress by convict artist Thomas Bock has become a symbol for the near genocide of a people—along with another, *The Conciliation* (1840) by Benjamin Duterrau, considered to be the first historical epic painting in the Australian colonies (Museum of Australian Democracy, 2011). The Franklins' tenure in Tasmania—including Mathinna's story—is also the subject of a suite of poems entitled *Jane, Lady Franklin* (2004) by Adrienne Eberhard, as well as Richard Flanagan's novel, *Wanting* (2008). The hunting down of the Aborigines is the subject of Rohan Wilson's award-winning novel, *The Roving Party* (2011). Visual artist Victoria King's *Necklace for the Sawyer's Wife* (mixed media) was inspired by the story of Truganini, an Aboriginal woman whose husband was killed by two woodcutters while being rowed across the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Don Kay's (2011: n.p.) symphony, *The Legend of Moinee* (1988), and his cantata for children's choir and orchestra, *There is an Island* (1977), are tributes to Tasmania's Aboriginal mythology. *The Legend of Moinee*, Kay says, 'is kind of a potted history of Tasmania'.

[It] combines some of these aspects of abstraction and metaphor and history, based on mythology that Augustus Robinson gleaned from the Aboriginal tribes about the creation of the southwest. The names of the movements give you a bit of an idea: a description of the island, the Aborigines expressing their feelings at the arrival of the free settlers; the English, Irish ... the west country seamen coming, like a sea shanty; the views of the free settlers, three separate

sections; the convicts and their attitudes; Hobart Town in the early nineteenth century and the idea of trying to capture that. Then going into the Black War.

He notes that very little is known about Aboriginal music, so his attempts to capture it were ‘groping, intuitive, evocative’. He says, ‘The whole thing is sympathetic to the concerns of the effects, the negative effect on the Aborigine, and the land we share, in an attempt to reconcile’. In a similar vein, Kay has co-written a three-act opera with librettist John Honey called *The Bushranger’s Lover* (to be performed in its entirety in November 2014), based on a story of two characters from colonial Tasmania between 1812 and 1818: bushranger Mark Howe and his Aboriginal lover, Black Mary (von Stieglitz, 1966: n.p.). Says Honey (2013: n.p.):

In my bottom drawer I had just the material on which to base a dramatic, horrifying, but ultimately uplifting operatic experience. I’d done some development on the story of early Tasmanian bushranger Michael Howe and his Aboriginal lover Black Mary for a movie project that had languished.

The two had previously collaborated (in 2010–11) on two song cycles, *Aspects of the Vine*, inspired by Honey’s ‘long-standing interest’ in Tasmanian wine, and *Bird Songs*, about the staple birds that inhabit the bush south of Hobart where Honey lives with his wife. Honey was thrilled that Kay’s previous acting experience gave him the ability to imagine ‘himself into the skin of the characters and [realise] the drama and emotion of the libretto in music’.

Perhaps the most famous Tasmanian symbol is the Tasmanian Devil, iconic because of the Looney Tunes character ‘Taz’, a ferocious and stylised Tasmanian Devil who, along with Bugs Bunny, entertained millions of children worldwide with his vortex spin and voracious appetite. Lesser known to the rest of the world is the thylacine or Tasmanian tiger, which became officially extinct when the last one died in captivity in 1936, although unconfirmed sightings exist to the present day and ‘true believers’ continue to mount expeditions to seek them out. The thylacine is the subject of Julia Leigh’s *The Hunter* (1999), which was made into a feature-length movie of the same name, filmed in Tasmania and starring Willem Dafoe (2011).

It is widely argued that the environmental protests over the damming of Lake Pedder in 1972 were the beginning of a greater environmental awareness in Tasmania (see, for example, Hay, 1991–92: 62–64; Hay 1994b: 4–7), the birth of the Green Party (Walker, 1989), and the catalyst for a growing cultural determination that continues to this day. Protests over proposals to dam the lower Gordon and Franklin Rivers in the 1980s demonstrated that there was considerable public regard and support for Tasmania’s beautiful and fragile wilderness areas. Photographs by Olegas Truchanas (1923–72) are credited for generating the large groundswell of support that mobilised in the doomed attempt to save Lake Pedder, whilst those of his protégée, Peter Dombrovskis (1945–96), are widely acknowledged to have been one of the most significant factors in the saving of the Franklin River. A full page advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* prior to the 1983 federal election displayed Dombrovskis’ iconic photograph, *Morning Mist, Rock Island Bend, Franklin River, Tasmania, 1979*, with the caption: ‘Would you vote for a party that would destroy this?’ (Bonyhady, 2004: n.p.). As Bonyhady notes: ‘Such photography has proved vital to environmental campaigns because most of us have not visited the places in dispute or seen the species in jeopardy. The photographs address a need for information in a way words cannot do. They show us what is at stake’. The work of these two photographers has been the subject of books, paintings, a documentary, and even an opera. Hillary Younger (2011: n.p.) credits these two ‘legends’, as well as photographer Galen Rowell, as her inspirations to take up wilderness photography, noting that Truchanas, who drowned in the Gordon River in 1972, ‘gave everything to save what he loved’. Dombrovskis, too (in 1996), died while photographing in the Western Arthur Range in southwest Tasmania. The legacy of these men extends to inspiring a new generation of wilderness photographers, such as Hillary Younger, and points to wilderness photography as an aesthetic act: ‘they are visual poets of the wild world’ (Hay 2007: xv). But, just as importantly, their work is a political act: ‘to remind—or even inform—those of us entrapped within mundane routines of the wonder that is out there in the tangled wild ... to recruit, and to affirm commitment and strengthen resolve’ (Hay, 2007: xv).

The clearfelling and burning of Tasmania’s forests to be replanted in forestry plantations—eliminating entire communities in the process—continues to be a point of protest today, resulting in such books as *The Forests* by Matthew Newton and Pete

Hay (2007), an extended photographic essay featuring ‘The Weld Angel’⁴³ on the cover, and art exhibits, such as Richard Wastell’s *We are Making a New World* (2006). Of Wastell’s exhibit, Richard Flanagan (2006: 5–6) writes:

The great forests are gone, and they will not return, and nor will the intense human response we had to such places. Everything hereafter will be ordered and imaginable, paintable and representable in a way that those wild places never were, and we will be less. They are intensely spiritual paintings by a painter whose close technique becomes ever more capable of conveying an enormous emotion ... These paintings represent something new in Australian painting: they mark the point where we finally acknowledged our connection with the land in the most profound way possible: by acknowledging the spiritual cost of its destruction.

Wastell’s paintings of ‘the wildness ... these hills that are tangled, messy scrub, unruly, a raw power’ take on large subjects that are part of the ‘pain and the beauty’ of Tasmania, including the devastation that has been wrought through the clear-felling of Tasmanian forests.

Many other Tasmanian and mainland Australian artists take these actions to heart, expressing through art the pain they feel when faced with unfettered greed, destruction of natural habitat, and the privileging of human over the non-human world. In 2013, a project and resulting publication called *The Skullbone Experiment: A Paradigm of Art and Nature* drew attention to a pristine wilderness area that was saved from the fate of being logged and converted to plantation. According to the book’s title page: ‘Eleven Australian artists immersed themselves in the ancient, remote landscape of Skullbone Plains on a wilderness residency hosted by the

⁴³ *The Weld Angel, 2007, Weld Valley, Tasmania, Australia*, by Tasmanian artist Allana Beltran, is a ‘sculptural site-specific performance art piece marrying together art and activism (artivism)’ (allanabeltran.com), in an attempt to halt logging of old-growth forest in the Weld Valley. Beltran, dressed in an angel costume complete with wings made of cockatoo feathers, sat on a wooden tripod for nearly ten hours, stopping the loggers from working. She was subsequently sued by Forestry Tasmania and the Tasmanian Police, making international headlines, but the case was eventually dropped (Lesser, 2008: n.p.).

Tasmanian Land Conservancy in February 2013’. The purpose was to camp out and interact with, to write, photograph, and paint, a tiny fragment of 28,000 hectares of land purchased in 2011 by the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, ‘the largest private conservation deal in Australian history’ (Purves, 2014: 3). By inviting artists into an ‘engagement with the charged landscape of a potent place, one not conventionally beautiful, yet extraordinary, emotionally overwhelming’ (Hay, 2014: 8), then sponsoring a Philip and Catherine Wolfhagen–curated exhibition with companion book, the Land Conservancy continues its fight to preserve the beauty of Tasmania through the emotionally charged language of art, what environmentalist and philanthropist Robert Purves (2014: 3) calls ‘one of the greatest connectors between people and nature’.

Other signposts leading to Tasmania’s greater cultural self-awareness and determination include the inauguration of *Island* magazine in the 1970s, which grew into a literary journal with a stellar reputation among writers from Tasmania, Australia, and the world. Flanagan’s seminal *Death of a River Guide*, too, heralded a new direction for Tasmanian literature (Polack, 2006: 93–4), creating the sense in Tasmania that the island was no longer a cultural backwater that crushed the life out of anyone who wanted to do anything creative (as writer Peter Conrad had thought for the first part of his life), and that local stories were worth telling—presenting a message to the world that Tasmanian stories were the stuff of good literature, imbued as they were with a universality that had the capacity to transcend the island’s shores.

Signposts, such as the formal apology by government to Tasmania’s Aboriginal people in 1975, along with the admission that Aboriginals were not ‘extinct’, and the 1997 apology to the stolen generation led to a more culturally aware citizenry, although the pain of near-genocide and racism can never be totally forgiven, or forgotten. Another is the Port Arthur massacre in 1996, in which gunman Martin Bryant killed thirty-five people at the historic Port Arthur prison colony. At the time the worst single gunman massacre in history, it made international news headlines—and led to stricter gun laws around the world.

Perhaps the person who did the most for re-visioning Tasmania as a central part of a network of islands, rather than as an island peripheral to Australia, was Jim Bacon,

who was elected as premier in 1998. Bacon's government for the first time formally used Tasmania's island status to strengthen islanders' resolve to succeed. His public policies and formation of the international cultural festival, *Ten Days on the Island*, in 2001, are examples of his commitment to his island home. Writes Andrew Harwood (2011: 122), 'rather than representing Tasmania in its old role as an island mendicant to the mainland, Tasmania would be presented (and present itself) in the cultural Festival as "a leader of islands" in a world of island cultures'. Bacon helped to fuel a recognition that one's heritage was something to be proud of, instead of hidden out of shame and guilt.

Most recently, the opening of the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in 2011 brought significant national and international recognition to Tasmania. Built for \$75 million by philanthropist David Walsh, the four-storey museum and gallery is the largest privately funded art gallery in Australia, and was, as Richard Flanagan (2013: n.p.) writes in a piece commissioned by *The New Yorker*, 'immediately welcomed by some as a new beginning for museums and derided by others as the end of art'. Located on the Moorilla winery estate on the Berriedale Peninsula north of Hobart, MONA features several controversial installations, making it what Walsh has called 'a subversive adult Disneyland' (Vowles, 2011: 14). In Hobart's newspaper, *The Mercury on Saturday*, published on opening day 22nd January 2011, the editorialist (22) writes:

This is a window for the world to view Tasmania in a fundamentally different way. We are already an innovative and creative community but the world, even our fellow Australians, may not always see us that way. MONA and its internationalism changes that from tonight when the doors open. Artistically Tasmania is no longer at the end of the earth but at the centre. It is a conceptual shift of Copernican proportions.

The museum has attracted the attention of the world, with articles in major international newspapers and magazines—including *The New Yorker*. In it Flanagan cites over 700,000 visitors (n.p.) by January 2013: 'a growing caravan of celebrities, art lovers, aficionados, camp followers, and the curious', resulting in MONA [becoming] Tasmania's foremost tourist attraction and a significant driver of its

languishing economy’. Hobart has since been listed as one of Lonely Planet tourist guide’s (2014: n.p.) Top Ten cities to visit in 2013: ‘the recent arrival of the world-class MONA museum has the waters rippling, hip tourists flocking and Hobart rising from its slumber’.

The shift in seeing oneself as peripheral to the centre to *being* the centre—officially begun with Bacon, continuing with MONA, and now through the general explosion of creative talent that is evident in Tasmania—will be discussed in Chapter 9.

6.5 ‘Narrative cartographies’: Newfoundland

*from ‘Too many stories’
(for Carol Penton)*

*I loves where I’m from.
When Joey Smallwood stood
on the tailgate
of someone’s truck
up by the Fogo Island Motel where the hospital is now
they threw rocks,
booed, yelled,
How dare you tell us we have to leave!
Too much water had passed under the bridge
too many people buried in the cemeteries
too many people struggled to survive
too many nights sitting around a kitchen with the lantern lit,
doing your homework, using home-made bread for your eraser.*

*Too many stories were told,
stories that must have been sprinkled with fairy dust
because they continue on.
Thank God for them.
They saved us.*

Understandably, with its history of recorded settlement dating back to the 1500s, Newfoundland has a much longer story to inspire. The early years of fishing settlements were immortalised in novels by Bernice Morgan, *Random Passage* (1992) and *Waiting for Time* (1994), which were subsequently made into an independent eight-hour television miniseries (2002) co-produced in Canada and Ireland. The genocide of Newfoundland’s Aboriginal population came about over

250 years of encroachment by European settlers on their traditional territory and resources. Bernice Morgan's novel *Cloud of Bone* (2007) 'memorializes the destruction of the Beothuk' (Polack, 2008: 149); John Steffler's novel *The Afterlife of George Cartwright* (1999) and Michael Crummey's *River Thieves* (2001) follow a similar theme. The extinction of the Great Auk in 1844 came shortly after Shanawdithit, the last known Beothuk died in 1829 (NL Heritage, 1997: n.p.). The story of the Great Auk was popularized in Edward Riche's novel *Rare Birds* (1997), followed by the independently produced movie by the same name (2001) starring William Hurt, Molly Parker, and Andy Jones, and directed by the acclaimed Sturla Gunnarsson.

The Newfoundland sealing disaster of 1914, in which 251 sealers died on two separate ships, the SS *Newfoundland* and the SS *Southern Cross*, during a blizzard, sparked novels such as *Death on the Ice* (1972) by Cassie Brown (discussed in Chapter 3), and is a crucial scene in Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998). In Johnston's novel, the protagonist Joey Smallwood was on the SS *Newfoundland* as a young reporter; the event reinforced Smallwood's hatred of the ocean and shaped his politics as a unioniser and supporter of the underdog. The disaster is also the subject of fifty etchings called *The Lost Party* by noted Newfoundland visual artist David Blackwood created in the 1960s and early 70s, and is the subject of several documentaries. Fogo Island's Carol Penton (2012: n.p.) hooks rugs that tell a similar story from Fogo Island in April 1914:

They were Jacobs brothers, from my community, and a couple of relatives from Fogo. They went sealing ... and they were missing, and heavy fog rolled in. At the end of the day, the story goes, the last man standing had the sealing gaffe. He didn't know where any of his friends were at the time. He spent his last hours carving into the gaffe ... all of their initials.

In July 1916, the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel, which took place on the first day of the cataclysmic Battle of the Somme, nearly eliminated the Newfoundland regiment. Six hundred and seventy soldiers died. David Macfarlane's memoir *The Danger Tree* (1991) is named after the landmark tree in No Man's Land. In perhaps a telling paradox, the 'combination of travel book, history and reminiscence [that] traces the

nature of the whole colonial experience in one of the stranger corners of the globe—Newfoundland’ (MacFarlane, 1992: back cover) was evocatively titled *Come from Away* (a term explored in Chapter 8) when it was published in England.

But the most divisive issue—and perhaps the one that has fuelled the most creative force—is the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation with Canada. After the colony went bankrupt, and a British Commission of Government took over the helm, Newfoundlanders were given a choice in a referendum: remain an independent colony or join Canada. Joseph Smallwood led the charge to Confederation, and after Newfoundlanders voted 52–48, Newfoundland joined Canada. Says Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.), ‘it’s like our first day in Canada was April Fool’s Day’. Smallwood went on to become the province’s first premier, and until he died in 1991 was referred to as Canada’s last living Father of Confederation. To this day, certain generations of Newfoundlanders remain deeply divided on the issue, and it is the basis of novels such as Wayne Johnston’s *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998)—which Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.) calls ‘a metaphor for unrequited history, lost identity, lost nationhood’—and Johnston’s memoir, *Baltimore’s Mansion* (1999). Another is Patrick Kavanagh’s *Gaff Topsails* (1997), which, says Dragland, takes place ‘between everything’ and has ‘the whole thing: the myth, the history, the geography’. Dragland notes that there is continuing controversy over the referendum. A movie that calls it a conspiracy theory is *Secret Nation* (1992), written by Edward Riche and featuring a Genie-Award-winning song by Ron Hynes called ‘The Final Breath’. The plot is based on the idea that the results of the referendum were doctored and that Newfoundland really was a ‘secret nation’. Bernice Morgan, in her novel *Waiting for Time* (1994: 72), writes: ‘It was all a plot, you see—right from the first. A trick to get us Newfoundlanders off the island—starved out and resettled upalong’.

In recent years, the act of joining Confederation has fuelled a new nationalism, emblemised in the tri-colour (pink, green, and white) flag that has become a symbol of Newfoundland independence. For some, this neo-nationalism is more a state of mind than it is about actually becoming independent from Canada. Curator Mireille Egan (2012: n.p.) calls it a ‘fashion of nationalism. The tri-colour is not even a real flag in terms of the official flag. So it’s a weird mix—people really know you don’t

want to go back to the years of tuberculosis and feudalism’. Indeed, a popular T-shirt showing the ‘Newfoundland Liberation Army’ features musicians wielding their instruments above their heads. Says Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.): ‘The question of islandness can’t be separated from the question of nation. Island nation: it was both of those things’.



Figure 6.3 – ©Living Planet, St John’s, NL (image used with permission; livingplanet.ca)

Bringing Newfoundland out of ‘feudalism’ into the twentieth century resulted in one of Smallwood’s most controversial acts as premier. Between 1946 and 1975, dozens of outports, including islands, were abandoned as part of the provincial and federal governments’ ‘resettlement’ policy that saw over 28,000 people removed from 307 outport communities (Maritime History Archive, 2012: n.p.). Resettlement was carried out ostensibly to avoid providing these remote places with services such as transportation, electricity, health, and education. At the same time, new industrial ‘growth centres’ were being created in the middle of the island to diversify the economy and lessen reliance on fish; developing industries would have a ready-made work force from the resettlement plan. Community and kinship webs were changed irrevocably as resettlement hauled people—many of whom hauled their houses with them—into the industrial world of the twentieth century, leaving, for many, grief and loss in their wake. The ‘seamless progression of time [was] snapped’ (Hay, 2006:

33), leaving many to suffer the loss of their homes, their land, their livelihoods, their communities, their identity.

On the Grey Islands, off the Great Northern Peninsula, government moved the people off and a herd of caribou on. Over two summers in the early 1980s, poet John Steffler (originally from Ontario but then teaching at Memorial University in Corner Brook) spent several weeks on the deserted and bleak islands; his book, *The Grey Islands* (1985) is a series of poems documenting his journey of self-discovery. He writes: ‘how well do you know yourself? / the various people / waiting inside’ (49). His poems capture the islands’ ‘scapes’—land, sea, sound, and time—and provide glimpses into its former inhabitants’—mainly fishermen’s—ways of life. In confronting the ghosts of the island—the people who had been forced by distant policy shifts to abandon their lives and their place—Steffler confronts the truth of ‘placelessness’ (Relph, 1976) for former inhabitants and for himself. In the end, he feels he has *become* the island: ‘I’m not just a man anymore. I’m an island. The wind and the smell of the place and the animals moving through” (145). Steffler (2013: n.p.) articulates this intense phenomenological experience through his poetry, demonstrating a deep psychological and spiritual attachment to a place on which he has had ‘particularly moving experiences’ (Relph, 1976: 43). It provided him with a unique story to contribute to a larger narrative, allowing him to feel more of a sense of belonging on the larger island of Newfoundland (further explored in Chapter 8), and, in the end, intensifying his relationship with it, with the Grey Islands, and with his own writing practice.

In the summer of 2009, visual artist and ceramicist Michael Flaherty, a native of Newfoundland’s Random Island (now connected by causeway to the main island and NOT resettled), recreated Steffler’s journey to the Grey Islands. He sought to connect the strands of past and present, human and non-human, presence and absence, by melding pottery shards left behind by the old inhabitants with caribou antlers shed by the new ones. While on the island he built a kiln ‘inside out’, inverting the kiln’s design ‘to place the entire island conceptually inside it ... Firing the kiln would, at least symbolically, fire the island’ (Wendt, 2012: n.p.). As Flaherty (2012b: n.p.) explains:

My idea was a combination of these two things. The making of a conceptual kiln which can fire or contextualize an entire landmass as a piece of art, and a reenactment of the character, in some ways, from *The Grey Islands*. I had a ready-made island that needed to be fired.

The islands' physical size and geographical separation allowed him the freedom to experiment with his craft, while at the same time make a political statement. After a thirty-two-day stay in almost complete isolation, Flaherty returned home to the mainland island of Newfoundland and created the show, *Rangifer Sapiens*, placing 'the pottery surface on the antlers and deteriorated moldy antler surface on the pottery'. The delicate blue Victorian-porcelain-style designs on the antlers carry the birth and death dates found on the thirty graves in the island's cemetery. The act of traversing almost the entire island by foot, and placing cone packs at the highest, eastern, western, and southernmost spots, was integral to Flaherty's project. As he (2012a: n.p.) notes:

In Steffler's book there is a passage near the end where the character proclaims something like 'I am this island'. I think that is what resonated the most for me, an integration of myself and the landscape. I think something finite, of a scale I could comprehend, was essential for this concept.

At the same time, the Grey Islands' relative isolation from and storied relationship with the main island were important element in his work. For instance, as noted in Chapter 2, Newfoundland suffered for decades as the scapegoat for central Canada, paralleling Hay's description of Tasmania as a 'psychological sink' (2006: 27). Thus it is ironic that the Newfoundland government should then decimate its outpost island communities, causing irreparable loss to thousands of its citizens. Indeed, it has been said that the Resettlement Program 'marks a psychic boundary between two countries (Newfoundland and post-1949 Canada) ... Resettlement is a subject deep-seeded within the collective (un)conscious of the place' (Johnson, 2001: 9). Steffler (2013: n.p.) saw the results of this displacement firsthand when he met the family of the well-known Newfoundland poet Al Pittman. Originally from the resettled Merasheen Island in Placentia Bay, the Pittmans 'really were deeply conscious of this loss of place, and loss of a tradition and way of life. I saw how scarred and hurt

and bereft and really in shock they and the people of Newfoundland were’. As Flaherty (2012b: n.p.) notes, ‘It’s been described as a cultural genocide, which I think is a bit of an exaggeration. But there’s no doubt that it had a traumatic effect on Newfoundland culture and many individuals’. As a result, Flaherty’s exhibit, his

entire journey, and the action of firing the island, could be read as a spatial and temporal engagement with loss ... the residue of both a history and living situation rich enough that a symbolic firing could only be read as a self-conscious gesture of representational failure, pointing to the vanity of any individual attempt at closure (Wendt, 2012: n.p.).

Thus, Newfoundland’s ‘resettlement’ story is an example of contested island places within an archipelago: how smaller islands can be at the bidding of a larger, controlling one, for the perceived political, economic, and cultural ‘good’ of the whole. It resulted in a sense of grievance and loss by many and is part of what has been called Newfoundland’s collective melancholy (Kelly, 2010: 25; Sugars, 2010: 8). The theme is also central to novels such as Donna Morrissey’s *Sylvanus Now*, Wayne Johnston’s *Custodian of Paradise*, and in the poetry of Mary Dalton. In Dalton’s book, *Allowing the Light* (1993), her poems, ‘geophysical’ and ‘not terese’s creed’, capture the emotions of two people from Merasheen Island, in Placentia Bay off Newfoundland’s south coast, which was resettled in 1965. Taking inspiration from stories she had been told by a resettled Merasheen Islander, who Dalton (2012: n.p.) says carries a ‘fierce devotion to an island’, she evokes the feelings of betrayal and loss from resettlement in these poems. Some houses were abandoned and now serve as summer cabins, but others were floated from islands to their new communities, an image captured in Dalton’s lines (1993: 50): ‘his eyes are memories / of lives smashed by decree / of drifting houses’. About this poem, Dalton (2012: n.p.) says:

The island is a metaphor for the psyche of the man. The man himself was adrift because he was separated from his island. But this man goes back—this phenomenon happens elsewhere, too—will spend as much time as he can get on this island, and it is a devotion that to me is unusual.

Her poem, ‘not terese’s creed’ (1993: 51), again, based on a story she was told, is about a woman who was ‘plainly extremely eccentric ... but was not leaving that island’: *‘her house was the last one to go / and she was on it— / in the middle of the bay / she put a gun / in her mouth and blew her head off’*—an extreme measure to be sure, but indicative of how deeply the woman was attached to her home and her island.

One island to withstand resettlement was Fogo Island, located in Notre Dame Bay. Known to Canadians simply as ‘Fogo’ from the chorus of the classic Canadian folksong ‘I’s the b’y’: ‘Fogo, Twillingate, Moreton’s Harbour, all around the circle’, in the 1960s its populace resisted government resettlement efforts. Carol Penton (2012: n.p.), editor of the local newspaper, *Fogo Island Flame*, notes: ‘We were told by Joey Smallwood [the new province’s first premier], “burn your boats, sink or swim”. So we chose to swim’. The community took a different tack, with help from Memorial University’s Extension Department (a member of whom had grown up on Fogo Island) and from a team of filmmakers led by director Colin Low. Twenty-eight films, some of which are available on the National Film Board’s website (Low, 1967), were created as part of an alternative federal government initiative called Challenge for Change, which used film to help communities identify areas for social change. Of the project, vernacular architect historian Robert Mellin (2003: 8) has written:

Residents living in isolated outports were united through an innovative, experimental process of community development based on the communicative possibilities of film. Extension service fieldworkers made documentary films in each community, and these were later used to show the residents of Fogo Island that they had common concerns.

Known internationally as ‘the Fogo Process’, this novel approach to community engagement and capacity-building resulted in greater co-operation among communities, a strengthened identity, and initiatives that kept the island viable—including the creation of The Fogo Island Cooperative Society that operates to this day. The Society, says Fogo Island artist Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.), ‘was probably the best thing that ever happened on Fogo Island. Even if our co-op doesn’t

make any money, but breaks even, it's a success'. He notes that if Fogo Island were reliant on companies such as the multinational Fishery Products International or Atlantic-Canadian-owned Ocean Choice, which must show 'x number of dollars for their investors, we wouldn't be here. They would have moved us somewhere else'.

These island survival stories are revisited in Chapter 9.

During the 1960s when he was growing up, Memorial University sociologist Doug House (2012: n.p.) experienced people's aspirations and hopes for a more prosperous future in Newfoundland, noting that people would think:

'Well, maybe we're going to get an A&W⁴⁴ here. Maybe I can get a franchise for Kentucky Fried Chicken'. So all of that Smallwood talks about, electrification in rural Newfoundland, building the roads, schools—there was a very strong sense of wanting to catch up to the rest of the world, but particularly mainland Canada.

For a time, House saw this enforced modernisation as 'giving up on Newfoundland identity', reinforcing the idea that everything is better 'from away'. But a turning point came in the 1960s. House points to Smallwood's initiative to create Memorial University in 1961, which brought in hundreds of youth from the outports and resettled islands—Newfoundlanders who had never thought it possible to attend university. House compares it to Quebec's 'Quiet Revolution':

We didn't have a university before Confederation. But a lot of the people who came out of that university were the same people who then started questioning what was going on—this kind of headlong rush into modernism. So a lot of what happened, particularly in the 1970s during the Peckford years, is that people like Cabot Martin, who worked with Peckford ... were very consciously

⁴⁴ A&W was North America's first successful fast food chain, known for its drive-in restaurants and carhops, its 'Burger Family' (Papa, Mama, Teen, and Baby Burgers), and frosty mugs of signature root beer. A&W started in 1923 in California, and began its expansion into Canada, selling franchises to local business people, in the 1950s.

resisting that kind of submersion of Newfoundland culture, Newfoundland identity, into this modern Canadian, North American, American, culture.

The subsequent opening of the University's Folklore department, with its assemblage of professors and students carrying out groundbreaking research, was a significant turning point in Newfoundland's cultural evolution, particularly in how the University brought culture, language, and tradition to the mainstream. Says Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.): 'Folklorists came from the States, and recognised the culture as something that was worth celebrating, [so] began teaching it to the students who were from here'.

A seminal example of their impact was on the foregrounding of Newfoundland culture through the practice of 'mumming', a Christmas custom brought from the British Isles in the 1700s, which entailed dressing up and visiting house to house whilst imbibing copious amounts of food and drink. When the custom in England 'degenerated into rowdiness and sexual teasing' (Pocius, 1996: n.p.), social reformers introduced the more formal mummers' play. In Newfoundland, too, the custom was banned in 1835 (Moore, 2011: n.p.), since being masked often led to a loss of inhibitions and more abusive behaviour, particularly when the hosts/victims were from the ruling merchant class. In 1972, author, playwright, director, and audio producer Chris Brookes and anthropologist Lynn Lunde created an acting ensemble called The Mummers Troupe, to reignite the tradition through performances of the *Traditional Newfoundland Christmas Mummers Play*. They produced a number of travelling theatre productions as well, focusing on a wide range of often politically charged topics to 'restore a sense of dignity in the idea of being a Newfoundlander, to speak to and for the people of different Newfoundland and Labrador communities, and to work to change the then stifling economic and social structures in the province' (Farquharson, 2000: n.p.). In 1984, a song called 'The Mummers' Song' (1984) by the Newfoundland band, Simani, 'elevate[d] mumming to a pervasive symbol of Newfoundland identity' (Pocius, 1996: n.p.). Brookes went on to publish a book called *A Public Nuisance: A History of the Mummers Troupe* (1988) and produce a two-part radio documentary on mumming (batteryradio.com).

Around the same time, in 1982, the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* was published: Mary Dalton calls it ‘a book to break spells’ (Dragland, 2012: n.p.), capturing the distinctive dialect and idioms of Newfoundland, ‘great words and expressions and whatnot that have survived here because of its islandness, and isolation’ (Jarvis, 2012: n.p.). Says Dragland (2012: n.p.),

The Dictionary of Newfoundland English is a contribution to the maintenance of island culture, and it’s also become a spur to writing. It’s a pivotal book. Maybe this is part of the islandness, too, the preservation of a distinct dialect, or dialects, vocabulary. Somewhere in the United States you can find remembrances of old language from England as well, but I think maybe that islandness has contributed to the relative preservation of accent and syntax. It comes from elsewhere originally and takes on its new forms, but is distinctive.

Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.) echoes Dragland’s comment about the dictionary being a ‘spur to writing’. She sees other writers using ‘Newfoundland English’ in their work, including the language in Michael Crummey’s *Galore*. She says, ‘I would call those unique—diction, cadence, vocabulary, weird twisting up of the language to come up with something fresh and new. But it’s not new, it’s ancient. You’re hearing English in a new way’.

While some have called this period the ‘Newfoundland Renaissance’ (Golfman, 2008: n.p.), with culture becoming ‘part of the political lexicon in the 1970s’, with the emergence of CODCO, writers, visual artists, performing artists, and film makers being recognised as a ‘potent political force’, a local historian says, ‘It was not a revival. It was an arrival’ (Golfman, 2008: n.p.). People began looking at culture as more of ‘a commodity’ than just something that islanders did as a creative outlet and to entertain themselves. As Golfman goes on to say:

To be sure, the concept of a distinct and essential cultural reality started to crystallize during that period in line with the evolution of a more formal and focused provincial arts policy. But it is important to separate the sense of culture as a commodity, as government policy prods it into being, from a much more amorphous, dynamic sense of culture as lived experience tied to history

and landscape. The term might have taken up its own official currency since the 1970s, but everyone living here understands that its roots are old, deep and tangled.

These deep roots continued to find expression, in music through the CBC radio program *The Great Eastern* (1994–1999), which brought the music of the Wonderful Grand Band and Figgy Duff to the rest of Canada; in humour and satire, with the show *CODCO* which aired on CBC television (1987–92); in literary and visual arts with the magazine *TickleAce* (1977), ‘a new platform for writers and visual arts in Newfoundland and Labrador (Dawe et al, 1977: 1); and in book publishing, with the founding of Breakwater Books (1973) ‘on the principle of preserving the unique culture and stories of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Maritime provinces’ (Breakwaterbooks.com). Says writer Bernice Morgan (2012: n.p.):

When I was young ... there were no books by Newfoundlanders. In most people’s consciousness there weren’t even any Canadian writers of note. Pratt had written some poems. Some of them long and not incomprehensible, but boring. Margaret Dooley had written—[but] she was not in our textbooks. She was alive, but we just didn’t know about her. To become a writer you might just as well have thought you’d become an astronaut.

But the publication of books of poetry by Al Pittman, Tom Dawe, and Clyde Rose (co-founders of Breakwater Books) in the 1960s and 70s, and first novels by Newfoundland’s Percy Janes (*House of Hate*, 1970) and Wayne Johnston (*The Story of Bobby O’Malley*, 1985), by national publishers McClelland & Stewart and Oberon, respectively, heralded a change. These books’ critical reception signaled the arrival of Newfoundland literature on the national and international scene, and cultural production seemed to snowball. Folklorist Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) puts the timing of the so-called ‘Newfoundland Renaissance’ in the context of the global folk movement of the 1970s:

That kind of was happening globally, that anti-colonial movement. People were going, we can write about our own place, we don’t have to write about the British Empire anymore. We are our own people. There really was a shift in terms of how people saw themselves artistically.

John Steffler (2013: n.p.), too, sees the 1970s as a ‘period of ferment, and artistic activity’. But he notes that Newfoundland attracted back-to-the-landers from mainland Canada, as well as draft dodgers from the United States, while ‘there was that sense of young people striking out and trying new and different things, in Newfoundland it took partly the form of reflecting on their heritage and their culture in new ways’.

Expressing ‘heritage and their culture in new ways’ went on to include a veritable explosion in book publishing, dance, theatre, and television. Bernice Morgan (2012: n.p.) credits the plethora of Newfoundland novels published in recent years to a ‘build-up of stories that had never been in print: they had been told and told, but, I think we, and me, to some extent, [as writers] exploited those stories’. St John’s storyteller, dancer, and choreographer Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.), too, tells these stories through her company Docudance, which integrates dance, theatre, and film in live performances. Based on interviews she does with elderly residents, she creates a documentary for the stage. She says, ‘the book, *Island Maid* [O’Leary & Pelley, 2010] was a great touchstone for me. It was the beginning of me working with recorded conversation. I loved hearing the stories of my family, my grandmothers, probably had an extra yearning to hear them’. Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.) notes how those stories were retold through theatre and television, which went on to receive national attention in the 1970s and 80s, saying, ‘It was theatre, really radical new theatre, and when they brought that stuff to the rest of Canada, it was brand spanking new, and very politically driven and smart. And brash and in-your-face exciting’.

In 1993, Newfoundland’s distinctive culture and stories were suddenly at the centre of the world stage when American author Annie Proulx’s novel, *The Shipping News*, became an international bestseller and won the Pulitzer Prize. Newfoundlanders’ reaction to ‘her lucrative exploitation of a place not her own’ was ambivalent at best, with ‘the popular view being that the novel was grossly inauthentic, misleading and misrepresentative’ (Golfman, 2008: n.p.). However, it was the lure of the island, ‘its celebration of place, its implicit acknowledgement of the way the island had worked a form of enchantment on an unsuspecting outsider’ that led to her writing the novel. Golfman continues:

In effect, her entire experience in Newfoundland, from the moment she had stepped off the ferry in Port aux Basques, was informed by a strong sense of the uncanny. Something about the place had called her to make connections and launch a career she could hardly have imagined. Every Newfoundlander and a lot of happily transplanted mainlanders listening to Proulx's account of island appeal understood what she was talking about.

While Proulx's book became a bestseller, the local publishing scene flourished, too. Bernice Morgan's critically acclaimed novels *Random Passage* (1992) and *Waiting for Time* (1994) portrayed several generations of Newfoundlanders involved in the fishery from early days through to post-collapse. At the same time, other writers were encouraged to send their manuscripts off-island. Says Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.):

In my own case, and in the case of Michael Winter and a few others from here, we all did a course with Larry Mathews, and he said, to begin, publish off the island. There was Wayne Johnston's phenomenal success. He was the first Newfoundlander to reach an international audience on the scale that he did. But it was CODCO, and it was Figgy Duff, and an idea about exporting the culture that just came into being around that time.

Moore's first books of short stories and novels went on to receive critical acclaim nationally and internationally, winning the 2006 Commonwealth Writers' Prize Best Book Award, Caribbean and Canada Region for *Alligator* (2005); the book was also long-listed for the Dublin Impac Award. She then wrote about one of two oil-related disasters: the 1982 sinking of the oil rig *Ocean Ranger* in which eighty-four oil workers lost their lives in a severe winter storm, publishing, in 2010, *February*, a novel that chronicles the family of one of the men killed. The book was long-listed for the Man Booker Prize and won the prestigious CBC Radio Canada Reads contest. The disaster was also documented in a non-fiction book and play by Mike Heffernan called *Rig*, and the song by Ron Hynes called 'Atlantic Blue'.

Moore's most recent novel, *Caught* (2013), chronicles the exploits of David Slaney, a young Newfoundlander who goes to jail when fishermen turn him in for smuggling marijuana after he and his partner are lost in the fog off Newfoundland's coast while trying to land their shipment on shore. Later, after escaping from prison, Slaney finds

himself in Colombia, hatching another plot to make it rich with yet another shipment. While negotiating a deal with a drug lord, he compares his home Newfoundland with the poverty he sees in Colombia (221–2):

Slaney said he appreciated the position Lopez was in, and the position of his workers. He spoke about the imperialism of the United States, particularly in Central America, and he mentioned each of the countries there and the dictatorships propped up by the West. But then he spoke about Newfoundland and the relative poverty on the island and how cold the water was and how hard it was to make a living from the sea as his forefathers had done. He spoke about the Commission of Government, and how his grandfather had had the right to vote stripped from him and the bad teeth of Newfoundlanders and rickets and scurvy and frostbite. He spoke about weather, ice, and snow and the great sealing disasters.

Moore's character, Slaney, is shaped by generations of Newfoundlanders who carry their grievances with them, yet who keep repeating the same stories—which, for some, constitute mistakes—over and over again. In the end, Slaney is caught yet again. He serves his prison sentence, and returns to Newfoundland to 'buy a piece of land around the bay ... somewhere with a view of the ocean ... a bit of land, grow a few potatoes' (313). Slaney realises just how deeply his character has been formed by his adventures, but whether he can ever get beyond the stories that have shaped him is only hinted at by the novel's end. The reader is left to wonder if Slaney will be redeemed or not.

That so much Newfoundland art eulogises the past is suggested by the deep time inherent in the ancient geologic landscape combined with significant historical events, first as an independent colony and then as a province of Canada. This combination creates a 'continuum over time, constructing an ancient inheritance for Newfoundland in the present' (Sugars, 2010: 8). Sugars (9) goes on to write:

What distinguishes this, and other forms of psycho-genetic determinism that inform much of the discourse of regional identities in Canada, is the implicit, semi-mystical link that is established between geography/history and heredity. In this case, the pure antiquity of Newfoundland is somehow seen to inform the

genetic makeup of its people *as* a people. More specifically, this antiquity is imagined to be a constituent contributor to the inherited character traits or collective psyche of Newfoundland.

The myth of ‘environmental Darwinism’—in which elements of place such as harsh environment, climate, extreme isolation are supposed to predetermine a person’s character—Sugars (2010: 9) suggests, extends to Newfoundland:

In Newfoundland, this myth achieved an almost Galapagos-like purity as an isolated colony in which the determining effects of landscape on the population took on a clarified form: on the one hand creating a distinctive character, on the other relegating Newfoundlanders as a kind of atavistic throwback providing a glimpse into the settlement past.

Newfoundlanders carry a strong sense of identity, based on centuries of stories of people formed by the formidable landscape and climate, and the living conditions that result from being surrounded by the North Atlantic Ocean. Newfoundland’s island status has amplified the stories to the point that the history and geography take on mythical status. Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) attests to this amplification when he compares it with the rest of Canada:

I think Newfoundland has this history that is very different from the rest of Canada. And I think a large part of that has to do with its island nature. So much of our outport culture is based on the fishing industry. We have had relative isolation, which meant that aspects of culture survived here that didn’t in other places, things like our musical and storytelling traditions, folklore and language. I think that the fact that it’s been an island that was politically separate from Canada for so long has really influenced that character and identity.

As suggested in the preceding examples of Newfoundland artistic expression, the past plays a starring role in Newfoundland’s present. Curator Bruce Johnson (2012: n.p.) says people take strength in ‘the weight of the past’

which is also the cushion of the past. We have an amazing literary culture or narrative culture. So you can’t swing a cat from here and not hit three people

who haven't been up for a Giller Award.⁴⁵ At the same rate you have this weight of a culture of eulogy and remorse, which is changing again. Some people think it's a golden age that we missed. That's not true. Today—thirty years [the anniversary of the sinking of the] *Ocean Ranger*. You won't find a high school in the city where there's not something happening. Which is appropriate.

Sugars goes on to use Michael Crummey's novel, *Galore* (2009), as an example of how cultural memory and identity serve as determiners of character. *Galore* is a semi-fantastical novel that uses elements of magic realism and the Gothic to tell the stories of two families from the coastal community of Paradise Deep, Newfoundland; it includes as one thread the story of William Coaker, founder of the Fisherman's Protective Union (1908), which changed the way the Newfoundland fishing industry had been operating for generations. *Galore*, says Sugars (2010: 32), is

a claiming of Newfoundland cultural memory and identity (encompassing place, history, and genetics) alongside a recognition of this claim as both transitory and dependent on an unsupportable investment in discourses of determinism. To embrace this discourse too fully is to endorse notions of essentialism and biblical-style predestination. To turn one's back on it is to voice ... apathy ...

It is this duality of purpose that creates what Crummey (2012: n.p.) has called a 'collective unconscious' or 'cultural DNA': 'a notion of a distinctive Newfoundland character that has both a geographical and ancestral basis' (Sugars, 2010: 23). Another of Crummey's books, *Hard Light* (1998), includes a suite of poems based on a colourful character from Newfoundland's past: a Captain John Froude (1863–1939) who was a fisherman, sealer, and miner before travelling the world as a seaman. He wrote a book Crummey happened across in the University bookstore. Crummey (2012: n.p.) says:

⁴⁵ The Scotiabank Giller Prize is one of Canada's top literary prizes for a Canadian-authored novel or short story collection.

I bought it on a whim ... It turned out my grandmother knew the guy ... who was largely self-taught. But he was somebody who was obviously really, really curious about the world. And really able to question the place he came from and the things that he was taught when he came upon other evidence of other things. He saw everything there was to see in the world, just about, and ended up back in the same town he was born and raised, and lived out the rest of his days there. There was one point in the diary where he talks about how he assumed people out in the broader world would be something greater than the people he knew. But having been around the world, he'd say Newfoundlanders measured up in every respect—at *least* measure up—if not more.

Crummey's book, *Hard Light*, goes on to capture in poetic form several generations of stories, from Froude's to Crummey's father's to his own based on several weeks sailing on a Labrador coastal ferry. That Crummey was so inspired by the stories arising from centuries of Newfoundland's sea-going culture is testament to the strength of the island's rich connections with the past.

6.6 The story behind the story: art goes political

from 'The Goddess of Small Things'
(for Rees Campbell)

*But at what cost?
knowing there is no gift from nature
that doesn't extract a price*

...
Like the people we killed to make our place here.
Woolnorth Point,
known by the black community as Massacre Bay
and the white community as Suicide Bay.
Another place where you see
the impossible choice
to be shot
or to leap off a cliff into a raging sea

*You are the island's conscience
brazenly pure*

As was established in preceding chapters, drawing artistic inspiration from nature and landscape is hardly a unique phenomenon, but for Newfoundlanders and Tasmanians, landscape and nature art prevails, partly due to the close proximity to nature on these islands: you can exit your front door in the biggest cities of St John's and Hobart and be in the bush within ten minutes. Indeed, from Tasmania's earliest colonial times, landscape was the primary subject for painters; collections include works by 'convict artists, naval officers, talented amateurs, or artists who visited briefly or remained to settle' (Kolenberg, 2005: 476). The Royal Society of Tasmania (established in 1843) 'quickly perceived the value of the art of their time and place' (Kolenberg, 2005: 476), resulting in a rigorous Tasmanian art collections policy that exists to this day.

But what is striking is how often these artists and writers are political in their message about the landscape, painting and writing about what we, as inhabitants of planet Earth, stand to lose. For instance, the work of painter David Keeling, one of Tasmania's best-known landscape painters, engages with landscape, but not, as art critic Peter Timms (2005: 40) says, just because it is beautiful:

That implies passivity. Above all, he is an inquisitive artist, constantly questioning why and in what ways the landscape is beautiful, prising apart his responses in order to examine the process by which such conclusions are reached. At a time when the natural world is being increasingly sentimentalized and commodified, even as it is being destroyed, that is one of the most important things an artist can be doing.

Keeling (2011: n.p.) compares the protests in the 1980s, when people were protesting the flooding of Lake Pedder and the damming of the Franklin River, to today: 'When we first came back, it was very politically charged, and that gave it a real fantastic edge. You always felt that it was a battle. It still is a battle ... Tomorrow we're going to drive up to Kelso because we want to go to the rally on Saturday against the pulp mill in Launceston'. Although he struggles with the idea of identifying himself as a political activist, he continues to weave a political message into his art:

I've always had this struggle about trying to do paintings that were relevant to my world. What I didn't want to do as a landscape painter is just reinforce

stereotypes, and it's so easy to drop into the sublime or the spiritual. So I always had my ideas around landscape as ... the most politically contested space ... The last ten years I've painted specific places but always they were sort of slightly compromised places. They were car parks in the wilderness, or suggestions of human interference or habitation. The most recent work is these architectural spaces, looking out to landscape. Landscape, in a way, has moved from—what was it that Robin Gray⁴⁶ called the Gordon, the Franklin, 'just leech-ridden'—to a commodity that we sell Tasmania with.

Keeling equates the landscape to a Raymond Carver story called 'Elephant', in which a father works harder and harder to support his children, which you 'keep lading more and more onto. It's moved from exploiting the landscape in that big industrial 50s vision ... to this wonderland'. He says that his biggest fear is that 'they'll turn Tasmania either into a kind of retirement, social welfare dystopia, or into some playground for the rich'.

The title of Rees Campbell's most recent book, *Brazenly Pure: The Truth and Beauty of Tasmania* (2012), comes from her poem, 'McGowan's Falls' (26): 'Brazenly pure, even the rain is / filtered through bronzed myrtle'. She says (2011: n.p.), "'brazenly pure" is to me a very good way of describing Tasmania. It is so pure that it's almost in your face with its purity'. The book is an elegy of sorts to the purity that the island is so close to losing. She writes (viii): 'Our beautiful world is in danger of being lost to greed, to the short-sightedness, the careless and the ignorance of many humans. *Brazenly Pure* brings some moments to keep, a reminder of the purity of our children's visions; and some knowledge about what we have'. Campbell says she cannot be anything but an activist:

We're raping and pillaging the land. I've got to be alive and active. We have no option. And we will lose these places. These pines are a thousand years old. And it takes thirty seconds with a chainsaw. Or a bulldozer or a road. We not only lose a thousand years, but we lose all that that made that possible.

⁴⁶ Gray was Premier of Tasmania from 1982 to 1989, and was a hard-line proponent of industrial development.

Like Campbell, writer Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.) reacts to devastating assaults on the environment, most recently her neighbouring community of Blackman's Bay has been affected:

That was all bush about three weeks ago, and now that's all gone. That's the local council. It's not so much insularity as lack of vision that really frustrates me. And the sense that nothing changes until there's a disaster, that we'll just keep doing things the same way. Whether you call that insularity, or something else ... it's a lack of vision.

Eberhard found herself shocked by what she saw on a flight back from the southwest corner of Tasmania:

We were flying over wilderness, all the mountains, and the lakes, and the incredible beauty of where we'd been. Suddenly there was what they call the buffer zone. It's not really a buffer zone at all, but just forestry. And it wasn't just a wide stretch, it seemed to stretch in length as well ... It was a very visual bringing home of the industry of it. It just looked incredibly busy, and it was trees disappearing in heaps, and burning. And then suddenly we were in the beginnings of civilisation, of occasional houses—then flying back over the houses, and through to Cambridge, where there's all the factories and the big outlets. It was like this huge imprint on the land—and the contrast between where we'd been and what we were coming back to was enormous, and really sad. Even though it's only an hour's flight, it seemed like—that was that thing about time—it just brought home what we do and how we change the land.

Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.), too, feels incredulous and 'horrificed' by what has gone on in Tasmania's environment in recent years. Wood notes the 2011 protests by Aboriginals against highway construction going through their sacred land in Brighton, just outside Hobart. She compares it to the 'drowning' of Lake Pedder, which could have been avoided. She says:

They could have built the dam, but it cost an extra \$10 million or something like that, and at the time they didn't have money and so they flooded the lake. This strikes me as exactly the same situation. Have we learned nothing? Why

can't we have both? Why can't we have the good road and the heritage? There's got to be a way. Maybe it costs an extra \$10 million. Maybe it costs an extra \$100 million. But we've got to get out of that binary thinking of either/or. You either have a timber industry or you have forests. You either have a road or you have Aboriginal heritage. You've got to move beyond that to the third point of how can we keep talking without getting into those entrenched positions until we actually work out how to get that third position where we both get what we want.

Part of Hillary Younger's (2011: n.p.) reason for taking photos is to express her love for a land that is under siege. She feels physically 'hurt' when she sees examples of forestry practices:

I went to an exhibition, Friends of the Florentine, and Allan Lieschman had taken some before and after photos, of where they'd put a road in, through the forest in the Florentine. I was so moved, I thought, 'I'm getting weakened and emotionally decrepit'. Basically I walked around and I couldn't speak because I was just about to burst into tears. I talked to [another photographer] about it because I was so moved. I couldn't understand why everyone around me wasn't crying. [He] just said, 'well that's an appropriate reaction'. I felt—whew—I'm really losing it, you know. Being able to actually do something apart from walking around holding a banner—it's why I take some photos.

In Newfoundland, Danielle Devereux (2012: n.p.) encounters some of the same attitudes toward the land as Tasmanians do: 'In terms of our environmental record, given how much we say we love this rock and this place, it's not particularly stellar. We might love the land, and fish in the sea, but loving them and actually respecting or taking care of them don't necessarily always match up'. Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) blames some of this on lack of vision:

We have no planning framework in this province. I am sick worried that we're going to wake up and find a Tim Hortons on Fogo Island. I've said it publicly: if one comes, I'll do everything I can to resist it. And if that doesn't work, I'll burn the friggin' thing down ... I think people are asleep. I don't think they realise the threat. Like Joni Mitchell: 'You don't know what you've got til it's

gone’. I went through this growing up here. I remember us throwing out our beautiful wood table that my dad made so we could get a chrome set.

While the focus on ‘contested space’ appears to be more prevalent in Tasmania, at least amongst the artists I interviewed, a good portion of Newfoundland’s artistic expression has been based on protesting policy determinations, as described in preceding sections. Some of these points of contention include Confederation, resettlement policies, the Catholic Church, federal fisheries policy, and multinational oil companies that privilege amassing wealth over individual safety. But all use art to convey a political message based on the desire to maintain and celebrate all that they cherish about Newfoundland.

6.7 Concluding thoughts

The preceding chapter has explored Newfoundland and Tasmania’s geographical circumstances and historical events as they have inspired artists: the ocean, home, and story. If I were to ascribe a motivation to their work, it would have to be, as Wastell and Eberhard and Wolfhagen have articulated so clearly, love for their islands.

The next chapter turns inward, taking the effects of ‘islandness’ to a more spiritual plane.

Chapter 7 The island mystic/que⁴⁷

God placed danger and the abyss in the sea, but he also made it heaven's mirror
(Pessoa in Zenith, 1998: 278).

The ocean and the island are powerful muses for artists, physically and psychically. But ocean and island often work on another level, too: a subconscious one accessed through symbols and metaphor. As noted in Chapter 3, 'island' has become one of the master metaphors of western civilisation, leading Gillis (2004: 1) to conclude that humans not only think *of* or *on* or *about* islands, we think *with* them, too. We have traffic islands in the middle of roads, where we can stand and wait with relative safety in a sea of vehicles before crossing a busy street. We have kitchen islands, which are often the heart of the house, a place to prepare food or eat with our families. To be islanded on a mountaintop equates with being surrounded by steep cliffs or impenetrable forests; often the roads leading in and out are impassable because of landslides or avalanches. To be islanded in a city alludes to being alone and isolated in a crowd; for some, it is akin to feeling abandoned on a desert island. Taking the metaphor inward, the island symbolises the body and/or ego in a sea of humanity. On the macro scale, seen from space, Earth is a tiny island in a vast universe.

Similarly, the ocean and its related vocabulary have become part of the lexicon to describe everything from emotions ('waves of despair') to cataclysmic events ('a tsunami of change') to change itself ('the tide has turned' or 'sea change'). The ocean can represent the unconscious or limitless possibility, serving as a hinterland for ideas. The ocean has a presence that often demands a questioning: of God and the unknown, the infinite beyond the horizon, the mysterious 'other'. Or the ocean can symbolise our gaze to the past or dreams of the future, constancy, the ebb and flow of life, or escape.

⁴⁷ Parts of this chapter are excerpted from 'The Island Mystic/que: Seeking connection in a postmodern world', in *The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred Places, Identities, Practices and Politics*, edited by Stanley Brunn (Springer, 2015).

These metaphors do what they are intended to do, or, as Don McKay suggests, ferry meaning across individual word boundaries just as they transcend geographical and emotional, human, and nonhuman (DeLoughrey, 2012: 176). Indeed, the fact that ‘island’ and ‘ocean’ are so prevalent in western thinking is a testament to their strength. But Hay (2013: 212) has urged resistance to ‘this call for abstraction’ in Island Studies, and invited scholars to avoid relegating ‘islands to idea, concept, metaphor’. For Hay (2006: 28), too often these metaphors are negative, casting aspersions on what it is like to experience *real* islands, making it seem as if ‘islandness is a dysfunctional state’. He contends that scholars who write about islandness without making reference to real islands provide grounds for those ‘who live real lives on islands ... [to be] entitled to resent this’ (2006: 30); DeLoughrey (2012: 174) calls it ‘metaphoric displacement’. Hay is correct in saying that the metaphor of islands has to a large extent been privileged over the real experience of islands—witness generations of islanders who have been subjugated to power imbalances that seem to be part and parcel of the colonialist mentality, or have been eliminated altogether, as in the case of the Marshall Islanders whose island became relegated to the metaphor of ‘laboratory’ when it became a nuclear testing ground (DeLoughrey, 2012: 176). But I contend that if a metaphor is this prevalent and recognizable, perhaps we should take advantage of the metaphor to deepen the experience of real islands. Can we not learn from the metaphor? Can there not be interplay between the two that will help us understand better the nuances of islandness?

In this chapter, then, I call upon the imagery that island artists provide, and explore the ocean and islands as symbols and metaphors that feed creativity and nourish the spiritual—without losing sight of real islands. I consider islands as sites of spiritual or religious retreat, and as ‘thin places’, where many feel that the connection between heaven and earth is at its strongest. I also examine the ocean and islands as ‘the other’ in the realm of the supernatural—all with the goal of deepening our own understandings of islandness.

7.1 *Oceans and islands: the metaphor*

*from 'Deep Space'
(for John Steffler)*

Being on the edge of the sea
is like looking from the edge of the earth
into outer space

*Late-night CBC newscasts
weave in and out the shortwave
Words furl into the sleeping bag
you hold tight to your chin
Curl around ancestor whispers
that mingle with late-night notes
Miracle of a piano sonata
your conduit to the universe*

Islands as boats and books and the autonomous self, oceans as imagination and leaving home and the universe: all exemplify how these metaphors have been used in the musings of some of the artists I interviewed. For example, Bruny Island's Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) equates sailing on a boat with being on an island: 'There was always that link I feel with islands and boats. It's a little intimate space in this vastness, constantly pitched with those opposites. You can dream in that space. Open-endedly'. From the safe intimacy of her father's boat, as a child Boulter could look out to the ocean and daydream; the ocean became a playground for her imagination. Now, as an adult, the island represents—literally and metaphorically—the boat: looking out from Bruny Island to the Great Southern Ocean, she experiences the ocean as a vast canvas awaiting her brush. The boat, island, and ocean are integral to her lived experience.

Tasmanian author Danielle Wood (2008: 159) quotes Bongie (1998: 21) when she writes: 'when the childhood landscape happens to be an island, "a perfect model for the would-be autonomous self", a particularly resonant note is struck'. Wood (2011: n.p.) explains that in literature, 'the island has so often been a representation of the self'. For example, in the novel, *The Alphabet of Light and Dark* (2003: 5), her child character Essie is isolated on her home island, Bruny Island, but is doubly isolated because she has chosen to remain mute. '*I am an island, too,*' Essie thinks. 'Half her

life she has lived without words, with a blue moat of silence all around her'. This boundary renders equally the isolation of silence, the isolation of the sea (appropriately blue in colour, and, perhaps, describing her emotional state as well), and the islanded self at the centre.

The 'islanded' nature of childhood is also articulated by Tasmanian poet Louise Oxley, who uses the ocean metaphor to describe her children growing up. In one poem, 'Leaving the Room' (2005: 16), she writes: 'Each time I return / I am farther back, more ebb / than flow, out beyond the rocks'. For Oxley (2011a: n.p.): 'It's a symbol of moving away into something mysterious, a bit unknown. A little bit dangerous also. Drifting out, maybe losing touch with things'. In our conversation, she also equates islands with the escapism that books and reading can provide, describing her mother's experience as an only child raised by 'rather Victorian' aunts: 'I guess that kind of coloured her experience of islandness. She was very much an island. She really enjoyed language, and reading, and still in her 80s has always got library books by her armchair'. Being able to escape into a book is akin to going to a paradisiacal island where you can ascribe a personal fantasy onto the world you envision, using your own imagination to fuel the words on the page—and, in the escape, you can island yourself from the world around you.

Sometimes it is difficult to separate island from ocean, self from universe, within the metaphor: each can serve as connector and conductor. Prince Edward Islander David Weale (2012: n.p.) finds that a small island is a powerful metaphor for the self. Each island (read 'human') is surrounded by the ocean, 'a vast mysterious domain that also connects you with every other part of the Earth' and is a way of 'connecting with the universe'. But, he says, 'the mystic doesn't experience nature or the ocean as something that separates you, it's a reminder of our connection with the universe. An island consciousness does that'. At the same time, Weale notes that the Northumberland Strait (between Prince Edward Island and mainland Canada) creates a separation that allows something 'different' to happen on the Island, 'a sense of possibility that we don't have to be conventional, we don't have to be like everybody else'. He sees separation and connection in terms of spiritual and artistic expression: 'Let us be *out* of ourselves. Let us express ourselves in our society, in our architecture, in our music'. For Weale, this drive to remain separate and discrete was

epitomized during discussions over the construction of a ‘Fixed Link’ in the late 1980s and early 1990s; not since the years leading up to Confederation was the jurisdiction’s islandness discussed so openly as during that debate. Weale was a leading opponent of the plan to build a fixed link to the Island, based on what he calls the metaphor—held consciously or unconsciously—‘about the sacred separateness of the place, and the disinclination to have that umbilical cord to the mainland’. He told me that

the people who were so powerfully pro-bridge were the people that didn’t cherish being separate from the conventional. They wanted to be totally part of the ego, of the conventional world. The mystics wanted separation. We knew that we were part of that world, but there was some comfort and pleasure in recognizing that we were, as Christ said, in the world but not of the world, somehow.

Expatriate Tasmanian Peter Conrad (1988: 110) takes such sentiments a step further when he writes: ‘The enislèd ego bobs about on the ocean, like the bottled message of the castaway which no one will ever read’. For him, growing up on Tasmania was like being a castaway who is forgotten by the rest of the world. Conrad compares his enislèd ego to the island; then, to illustrate his point and complete the comparison, he uses the example of Tasmania being so inconsequential to mainlanders as to be left off the map.

Of course, a metaphor for island that resonates deeply is the idea of Earth as an island, conceptualised most vividly with the first photographs of Earth from outer space. Writes Jean Arnold (2002: 24–35): ‘The small spherical island Earth set in an endless ocean of space ... this islandlike image has emerged as one of the most powerful of all in determining our own cultural ideologies and discourses’. For much of the general populace, seeing the image for the first time made real the metaphor: they became conscious, perhaps for the first time, of Earth being a small island in a vast universe. Rees Campbell (2011: n.p.) translates this insight into her philosophy of life: ‘An island—this is all there is. So make the bloody best of it’.

John Steffler (2013: n.p.) describes his experience on the Grey Islands in similar terms, equating archipelagic islands to stars in the galaxies, the otherworldliness of

the ocean to the universe: ‘some kind of transition from the Earth to way beyond the earth. I think the ocean epitomises wilderness, in the sense that it’s unbroken and in the sense that it’s connected. The Earth is connected to outer space in the human psyche ... an unbroken wilderness’. Steffler credits his own artistic responses, or his ‘inclination to make art’, to the excitement he experienced in response to natural phenomena:

to something sacred, something numinous in the world. That hasn’t fundamentally really changed—that sense of the miracle or the mystery of just being in space and time, and being alive and seeing the world around us. It seems to me fraught with something wonderful, and sometimes deeply terrifying, because of its power and scale in relationship to the human.

Steffler regards the sense of the sublime as ‘essential to Newfoundland experience, that sense of something beyond the human, overwhelming in its power’. He attributes this in part to the climate, but particularly to the ocean, ‘its coldness, or its disregard for human life, which is both beautiful and profoundly intimidating. Even in St John’s, you’re so close to the open Atlantic that you feel that you’re in a little bubble of human contrivance stuck out in something overwhelmingly big and ancient’.

While Steffler’s sense of the sublime comes from the outside, David Weale’s (2012: n.p.) comes from within, and he describes the shore as a liminal place, which for him is ‘the holy land’: ‘a place to encounter the depth’, where you can open ‘inwardly’ to see and experience ‘your own connection to the universe’. He also writes (2011: n.p.):

Whether it’s a deep relationship with an island or a forest or a plain or a mountain, that relationship tends to take the person outside the narrow confines of head consciousness or ego consciousness, which is the enemy of creativity. For me, because I live on a small island, the quintessential experience in that regard is the experience of the ocean and the shore.

For both Steffler and Weale, small islands invite an intimate encounter with nature, which allows for a deep spiritual connectedness with something outside of themselves.

Writer Harry Thurston also experiences the ocean as a mystery (2011: n.p.), yet feels that connection, too, when he looks out from the Atlantic coast, knowing:

there's only one way home, but there are many directions. You can travel east, west, you will get there eventually. We stand before that mystery when we look out to the horizon. I think all of us feel that. We feel our own smallness. And yet we derive some energy from that contact. It is another world. When you reach the shore you are looking out into something that is, if not alien, then unconquerable.

These comparisons of self and island, ocean and universe by Steffler, Weale, and Thurston echo the comparisons of 'island as house' (from Chapter 5). In this instance, they connect the depths of the psyche (self, island) with the heights of the universe (God, ocean). They connect 'God'—or however one might define 'God' (a higher power, an urge to life, an impulse to create)—with our innermost thoughts and feelings. And, for some, when this connection is experienced, it can be extremely powerful, resulting in deeply moving artistic expression. As Wallace J. Nichols writes (2014: 16):

Beyond our evolutionary linkage to water, humans have deep emotional ties to being in its presence. Water delights us and inspires us (Pablo Neruda: "I need the sea because it teaches me"⁴⁸). It consoles us and intimidates us (Vincent van Gogh: "The fishermen know that the sea is dangerous and the storm terrible, but they have never found these dangers sufficient reason for remaining ashore"). It creates feelings of awe, peace, and joy (The Beach Boys: "Catch a wave, and you're sitting on top of the world"). But in almost all

⁴⁸ This is the first line of Pablo Neruda's poem 'The Sea', from *On the blue shore of silence: Poems of the sea* (HarperCollins: 2004), comprising twelve of Neruda's sea poems in Spanish and English. Translated from the Spanish by Alastair Reid, with paintings by Mary Heebner.

cases, when humans think of water—or hear water, or see water, or get in water, even taste and smell water—they feel something.

Of course, many have experienced the negative sides of being in close proximity to the ocean. As Weale (2012: n.p.) notes, for some, an island is a place of limitation, or constraint: ‘People who see it that way are seeing the island itself, the land, the limited place that you have to live’. They do not see the surrounding ‘mystery of the unknown as a place of infinite possibilities and emotion’, which can serve to enrich one’s life. The vastness of the sea can call up emotions that reveal an existential questioning; an awareness of the smallness of self in relation to God and existence. Many become mute in the face of the ocean, such as one of Wayne Johnston’s characters in the novel, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998). As a child and young man, Joey Smallwood watched his father Charlie rail against all the injustices of the world when he looked inward toward the land, but when he stood to face the sea, he was silent, stifled, paralysed with fear and a sense of emptiness and being inconsequential. For Charlie, the ocean represents failure—personal failure, the failure of his place, and the failure of God:

Charlie has gone away to Boston where he has failed and has come back home, so he’s railing against his neighbours, who know that he failed and came back with his tail between his legs. And when he turns around on his deck and rails against the ocean, he’s railing at a kind of larger neighbour, which is God or fate. He’s railing against what made Newfoundland as a whole, what it was when Charlie was a young man, which was a very impoverished, very insular and remote place (Johnston, 2012: n.p.).

As a result of watching his father rail against the sea, Smallwood, too, hates the ocean:

For though I had an islander’s scorn of the mainland, I could not stand the sea ... It was not just drowning in it I was afraid of, but the sight of that vast, endless, life-excluding stretch of water. It reminded me of God ... Melville’s God, inscrutable, featureless, indifferent, as unimaginable as an eternity of time or an infinity of space, in comparison with which I was nothing (Johnston, 1998: 131).

Devlin Stead, another of Johnston's characters from the novel, *The Navigator of New York*, says: 'Nothing so reminds you like the sea that the enemy of life is not death but loneliness'. For Devlin, being islanded from humanity is a fate worse than death.

7.2 From 'islands of the blest' to a secular spirituality

*from 'Deep Space'
(for John Steffler)*

You went out to the Grey Islands
but went in, too
to the ghost place where you
tripped over threads of stories

...

part of the unscripted dance you called yourself to find
there on the Grey Islands

*things in yourself that might be as surprising
as the things you encounter outside yourself
a two-way discovery
of what's in
and what's out
there*

Islands have been associated with metaphor, and, since ancient times, have also been equated with sacred space—itsself both metaphor and reality. From Ulysses' Greek Islands and Islands of the Blessed to Saint Brendan's Island and the Scottish island of Iona, islands have been seen by Pagans and Christians alike as 'place(s) of power and revelation: a place to cross from this world to the other' (Weale, 2007: 10).

'Indeed', writes John Gillis (2001: 56), 'islands have long been a symbolic presence in western culture, closely associated with the sacred in its multiple incarnations as holy isles and earthly paradises'. These ancient islands are imbued with mythic/mystic qualities; the 'Blessed Isles' stem from Greek and Celtic mythology (or Islands of the Blessed or Blest, and also called the Fortunate Isles, thought to be vaguely locatable in the Canary Islands or the Azores) and were the site of the Elysian Fields, in which heroes, the virtuous, and relatives of the gods lived out their afterlife (Atsma, 2000: n.p.). Other mystical islands include the island of Avalon, or island of apples, originating in the legends of King Arthur. It is said that Arthur's

sword Excalibur was forged in Avalon, and that he was taken there to heal from his battle wounds (Driver, 1999: n.p.). Saint Brendan's Island was a mythical island visited anywhere between 565 and 573 by priest Brendan of Clonfert while on his voyage across the Atlantic in a Curragh or leather boat. Described as 'a fantastic land: more beautiful and golden than he could have imagined' (Gill, 2001: n.p.), the island was never found by subsequent explorers. Even philosopher Thomas More's fictional *Utopia*, written in 1516, was posited as an imaginary island, since 'an ideal society, and consequently happiness, was possible only on an island, a delimited, finite space' (Vigneau, 2009: v).

The sacred island of Iona, located off the coast of Scotland, also has traditional significance for both Christians and Pagans. Its earlier name was *Innis nan Druidhneach*, which translates as the Island of the Druids (Dunford, 2009: n.p.). The island is now regarded as the symbolic centre of Scottish Christianity and is closely associated with Saint Columba and the monastery he established in 563 AD for those 'seeking seclusion among the "desert" of the Atlantic Ocean' (BBC Scotland, 2012: n.p.). A site of pilgrimage, for peasants and monarchs alike, Iona is where the Book of Kells was written circa 800 AD (Trinity College Dublin: n.p.).

Iona is also known as a 'thin place', where the veil between heaven and earth is most flimsy—a threshold where humans can connect to a higher realm. A thin place is:

something knocking on the heart which speaks of mystery and holiness, of dreams and truths which have outlived time ... There is an indescribable atmosphere in Iona as if a '*Presence*' dwells in the hallowed soil of the tiny island which has been washed by the waters of prayer down through the ages. Hallowed and blessed by St Columba and countless Christians for about 1,400 years, as well as by those who were there long before St Columba, is it any wonder that an aura of spiritual peace surrounds the island (Sandwith & Sandwith, 1959: n.p.).

Thus, both Pagans and Christians viewed islands as places where land and sea were at their closest: 'mesmerizing places like the wind-swept isle of Iona ... or the rocky peaks of Croagh Patrick. Heaven and earth, the Celtic saying goes, are only three feet apart, but in thin places that distance is even shorter' (Weiner, 2012: n.p.). With the

land laid bare, and the sky unveiled, Eric Weiner (2012: n.p.) argues that in a ‘thin place’ you could catch a glimpse of the glory of God, have a direct line to the cosmos; and, perhaps ‘thin places offer glimpses not of heaven but of earth as it really is, unencumbered. Unmasked’.

Called ‘sanctuaries of creation ... [where] the unpredictable becomes the means of discovery’ (Maddox, 1999: n.p.), islands help us ‘to anchor our longing in the ancient longing of Nature’ (O’Donohue, 1999: 15). As Mindie Burgoyne (2001: n.p.) writes: ‘They probe to the core of the human heart and open the pathway that leads to satisfying the familiar hungers and yearnings common to all people on earth, the hunger to be connected, to be a part of something greater, to be loved, to find peace’.

In the twenty-first century, islands continue to be regarded as special places. Certainly, the significant role islands have played in Old World explorers’ discovery of the New World is recognised—from the insights that have emerged from island biogeography, islands and island ecosystems have come to be seen as laboratories for all life. Islands also continue to attract humans to their shores. There is something in the human imagination—an ‘island drive’, if you will—that finds islands mysterious, safe, exotic, otherworldly, even when, in reality, they may not always be so. It is a ‘tenacious hold’, writes geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1974: 118): its ‘importance lies in the imaginative realm. Many of the world’s cosmogonies, we have seen, begin with the watery chaos: land, when it appears, is necessarily an island’.

But how does this ‘island drive’ manifest? For some, it comes in the form of a pilgrimage, with the outer journey mirroring the inner journey. Writes David Weale (2007: 167): ‘Where better to discover a doorway to some neglected corner of the soul than on an island, a place so clearly in the beyond ... for a high percentage of visitors to small islands the journey is a spiritual pilgrimage; a quest for the “blessed isle” of self-awareness’. Thus, in a secular world, islands have become a place to ‘unmask’: as vacation destinations to get away from it all, as refuges from mainstream society, or as places to strip down to essentials and get in touch with nature and self. For many, these spiritual pilgrimages become permanent relocation, as people seek to find ‘place’ amid increasing placelessness. To seek connection, or to belong, is the goal for many, and an island—particularly a small one—set apart

from the mainland by an encircling sea, is the ideal place to get away from the lumbering weight of progress, reassess one's priorities, and feel as if you belong to something larger than yourself and that is not necessarily of 'God'. Weale (2012: n.p.) tends to think of this 'secular spirituality' as a kind of neo-paganism, an ecological spirituality based on the interconnectedness of everything:

It's always been there, but it's been so suppressed in our culture. But now it's coming out full-force. If there's anything that will halt the kind of depredation of the earth, it's that. You can fight a lot of fights, environmentally and politically and economically, but the most powerful force is mysticism, because it's the consciousness that recognises that we are not separate from the earth. To me it's the most significant shift in my lifetime—the shift away from a sense of the transcendence of the sacred—the transcendent spirit in the sky—to an immanence, to a sense of being that yourself.

For Weale (2007: 10), there is no better place to experience that interconnectedness than on the shore, which, he writes, is 'a place of joining together; a powerful erogenous zone, where land and sea mate, and the eternal makes love to the temporal'. He calls it a 'threshold location', where 'possibility ends and danger begins'. In addition, this threshold is

a thin place ... where the thick veil of ordinary consciousness, that limits our vision, becomes less opaque; a place of liberation from the constraints of ego consciousness, and of deep and joyous connectedness with others, and with all that is, or ever has been. It is, in a word, an awakening to our own depth (Weale, 2011: n.p.).

Weale's group Shorewalkers meets bi-weekly—and not necessarily on the shore—to 'support and encourage one another in the movement away from the constructed boundaries of everyday consciousness into a wider field of awareness, and to discuss topics ranging from the mysticism of Julian of Norwich, William Blake, or Krishnamurti, to grief, fear, judgment, and ego' (Weale, 2012: n.p.). The name has become a metaphor for the insights that can happen while walking the shore, where the everyday is momentarily transcended by proximity to the ocean.

People say to me, ‘Do you guys walk on the shore a lot?’ And I say, ‘We do and we can, but it’s a metaphor’. The ocean is a metaphor for the eternal, and the land with the fields and the fences is a metaphor for conventional life, the ego. We live our lives on the margins. That’s what human beings do. We can never entirely get away from the measured landscape, and thought, which is the ultimate way that we split things up into pieces. But we also have this oceanic instinct, or connection, that keeps pulling us. So when you walk on the shore it represents the human experience (2012: n.p.).

In this passage Weale echoes Weiner’s description, quoted earlier, of ‘glimpses not of heaven but of earth as it really is, unencumbered. Unmasked’. Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.), too, speaks of being ‘unmasked’ on Fogo Island, and suggests that living on bare rock brings out one’s true character. On Fogo Island one can be closer to nature and able to live mindfully, a capacity she finds lacking in other places. ‘What’s missing from the conversation’, she says, ‘is the source of life itself: the natural’. She believes that this ‘source of life’ must be at the heart of culture, which she does not equate with art found in the city:

People say you must like going to Ottawa, there’s lots of culture up there. I haven’t seen much. It’s a big white mush with a lot of fancy buildings that have a lot of things in them that represent culture. Whether it’s artwork or anything else, if it’s done in the absence of a meaningful presence of the natural, it’s empty, it gets watered down till the dam breaks. It’s just adrift. It just feeds on itself till it gets empty.

Newfoundland writer Joan Clark also feeds off the bare rock, and the ‘splendid isolation’ (2000: 6) that comes with living on an island. The isolation, Clark (2012: n.p.) says, ‘is so nourishing, for your imagination in particular. One thing that attracts me about a bare rock is that you have to furnish it. You have to make up a story—that’s what I mean by splendid’. Similarly, in her novel *Latitudes of Melt* (2000), her character Aurora was found as an infant floating on an ice pan after the *Titanic* sank, and was forced to invent herself for ‘she didn’t know where she came from’.

7.3 The 'other'

*from 'If time should last'
(for Bernice Morgan)*

...
*Black dark, black dark.
You cannot imagine the blackness
until you go to a Newfoundland outport.
That much darkness, there was always an other.*

...
*And the other is frightening,
and threatening,
and breeds myths and possibility.
My mother's uncle always thought
people were watching them.
My mother's uncle said
sometimes if you went for a walk
you could see lights
in the marshes and bogs.
It's not hard to imagine the unnatural
if you're cut off from the outside world
unable to exit
have no phone
no lights
no roads.*

That isolation is conducive to living mindfully is a recurring theme in the interviews. For John Steffler (2013: n.p.) this is experienced hour by hour, minute by minute. His sojourn on the Grey Islands was, in part, an exercise in being forced to find something meaningful in the immediate, instead of 'tending to always look over or beyond what's obvious'. He says it is a 'slightly Zen thing', with the island 'a blunt place' to 'confront' himself. At the same time, it was a place to 'grapple with Newfoundland, and in particular that sense of loss of place within Newfoundland, the abandoned community, abandoned cemetery. The way people had to leave their ancestors behind. I wanted to go and kind of wander around in that world, a little bit like a ghost'. In so doing, then, Steffler was able to mingle with the 'ghosts' that some believe inhabit the islands. Steffler chose the Grey Islands as a place for his 'rite of passage, or vigil' because of their 'magical' properties. A friend who had been there suggested that there is a

feeling out there that's very special: 'I don't know how to put it into words, you should go out there'. Reading between the lines, so to speak, I kind of got the impression it's haunted. It's a place with a potent magic of some sort.

The haunted island represents one way of defining the 'other': ghosts and spirits and things that cannot be rationalised. However, defining 'other' as what one is *not* is a typically human characteristic, not confined to islands. When islanders define themselves against what they are not, that 'other' is usually the mainland, or mainlanders. Newfoundland's Bernice Morgan (2012: n.p.) notes that just who the 'other' is depends on one's perspective: 'I think in urban St John's, the other *is* the mainland. Not the rural. In Labrador they think Newfoundland is the other, the biggest enemy. And we think Ottawa—they don't know there's an ocean'. On the other hand, mainlanders have been known to regard islands as 'suitable self-contained sites for the deposition of those things that metropolitan society wishes to place without itself' (Edmond & Smith, 2003: 5), or, as what Hay (2006: 27) calls 'psychological sinks'.

The implications of this kind of 'othering' are examined in more detail in chapter 8. Here, in the context of islands as spiritual places, I explore how we define 'the other' in different terms: primarily as that which cannot be understood with the rational brain. In particular it is noteworthy that, over the millennia, the sea has been regarded as an unknown, filled with the fantastical. While 'land stood for order', writes John Gillis (2012: 60), 'sea meant chaos. Pagans associated land with life, the sea with death, and the coast with mysterious supernatural occurrences. Christianity was equally sea-fearing, associating the ocean with the realm of Satan'. Indeed, the expression 'here be dragons' stems from ancient maps depicting mythological creatures in the uncharted, unknown spaces beyond land masses. So it is not surprising that Newfoundland literature should include tales of forerunners and fetches, phantom ships and the fantastical, based on stories from the sea. Michael Crummey's novel *Galore* (2009) was inspired in part by the magic realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), a novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the themes of which Crummey recognised as being similar on his home island of Newfoundland (2012: n.p.):

When I finally picked up *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, I was amazed at how much it felt like Newfoundland ... A big part of it was the relationship that those characters had with the otherworldly, and how it impacted their lives. And the way that he [Marquez] wrote about it, as if he was writing about the weather. It always seemed to me that Newfoundlanders—particularly older outport Newfoundlanders—had the same relationship to the netherworld, they accepted it as part of reality, no different than the ocean.

Newfoundland's Bernice Morgan (2012: n.p.), too, felt the presence of something 'other' when she was growing up; and stories were passed down to her about ghosts and spirits. For her, though, the eerie presence did not come from the sea, but rather from inland:

My uncle said sometimes you could see lights if you went for a walk inland. You would see it in marshes and bogs, you would see light—a natural phenomenon—people used to talk about it. But what is it, phosphate or something, come bubbling up? Yes, but it isn't hard to imagine anything unnatural if you were cut off from the outside world and unable to exit; if you had no phone, no lights, no roads, you were absolutely cut off. So I think that breeds a kind of a possibility that there is an other lurking there.

Some Newfoundland artists find an equally potent sense of 'other' in the spirituality inherent in organised religion. For example, the art of Newfoundland painter, stained-glass artist, and sculptor Gerald Squires, a native of Change Islands off the northeast coast of Newfoundland, is at once nature-based *and* deeply spiritual. Indeed, critic Caroline Stone (1998: 6) suggests that his book *Where Genesis Begins* (2009) 'would not be out of place behind an altar'. In the book's 'Afterword', Stan Dragland (2009: 117) notes that 'Squires' response to the component of darkness that has its source in religion has not been to turn away, but toward it. More than one of his critics has noticed that his relationship with nature is religious in spirit'. Squires himself agrees: 'Art is prayer. It is communion with nature, with God. That is what you are aiming at in your lifetime. If you can tap that source, which is the greatest source in the world—the communion, the unknown—tap it and bring it through onto canvas, then you can make art' (in Winter, 1991: 29). But Squires also proposes that

it is the ‘dark side’ of religion that inspires his art: ‘There was a fear that the church had created in me as a child, and it’s something I’ve had to overcome as a man. Most of my work dealt with that and still does today’ (in Bruce, 1987: 24). To this day, some perceive that work as being ‘pushed in an ecumenical direction’ (Dragland, 2009: 117).

For Wayne Johnston (2012: n.p.), Catholicism has inspired at least three of his novels—*The Story of Bobby O’Malley* (1985), *The Divine Ryans* (1990), and *The Son of a Certain Woman* (2013). Each seems based, in particular, on the ‘deep dark secrets’ that people hide from the church, and from each other, often out of necessity in the bounded communities (and bounded psyches) that prevail in Johnston’s Newfoundland. His characters also often include children trying to reconcile the mysteries of the spiritual ‘other’ espoused by the priests and nuns with the mysteries of the flesh:

I can’t tell you the actual person, but there was a person who, like Donald Ryan in *The Divine Ryans*, was a Rhodes Scholar, went to Oxford, disappeared after Oxford, was thought to have gone to Montreal, came back, sort of out of the blue, to this hyper-Catholic St John’s family, and some years down the road after being married and had some kids, committed suicide. I don’t want to give the name, but that’s where the idea came from. The more prominent a family is in a place like St John’s, partly because of the Catholicism, and partly because of the size of the community, the more you have to be careful about secrets like that.

Johnston’s most recent novel, *The Son of a Certain Woman* (2013), takes direct aim at the church for its stance on lesbianism. For instance, in the novel—set in St John’s in the mid-twentieth century—if a woman was caught in a lesbian relationship, she would be shipped to ‘the Mental’ and lobotomised. Of *The Son of a Certain Woman*, Sanyal (2013: n.p.) has noted:

Watching the action unfold is as pleasant as sitting through a play one has known since childhood ... the relentless bullying of a child and his mother, the persecution of homosexuals, the hatred of female autonomy, the stifling social control exerted by a religious institution. The battle lines are familiar: the

representatives of the church are repressive and predatory, while the unbelievers are dissipated and humane.

Says Johnston (2012: n.p.), ‘secrets animate people’s lives and secrets are great for writers’. The popularity of Johnston’s books is testament to the power of secrets and the mystery of religion in close-knit communities—particularly Catholic ones.

In contrast to Newfoundland, where ‘the other’ is characterised through mostly benign yet uncanny presences such as forerunners and fetches, in Tasmania ‘the other’ is ‘Tasmanian Gothic’, a genre that combines ‘real and imaginary stories of cannibalism and deprivation from the State’s early days as a penal colony with caricatures of Tasmanians as degenerate, inbred, brutal chauvinists’ (Barsham, n.d.: n.p.). These stories are set against a landscape that is spectacularly beautiful, yet formidably rugged. Because Tasmania was so isolated from its colonial rulers, the archipelago was chosen to incarcerate those designated as Britain’s worst criminal (and political) elements—and its small satellite islands housed ‘the worst of the worst’. This strategy led to the perception that Van Diemen’s Land lay beyond civilisation, intensifying another stigma of horror and lawlessness based upon the genocide of the Aboriginals and the horrific stories from convict history. Indeed, characteristics such as isolation, deprivation, torture, madness, sodomy, cannibalism, and the uncanny are the bedrock upon which some of Tasmania’s earliest literature and art is built.

For instance, *For the Term of His Natural Life* by Marcus Clarke (1874) is based on the real-life confessions of Alexander Pearce, one of seven convicts who escaped from Macquarie Harbour Penal Station in 1822, on Tasmania’s wild and rugged west coast. Pearce was the last man standing after participating in the murder and cannibalisation of his fellow inmates. Jonathan auf der Heide’s psychological horror film, *Van Diemen’s Land*, is based on the same story. In it, the gory details are only suggested, but the men’s desperation is palpable, with a ‘heart of darkness’ feel: the Tasmanian bush is harsh and unrelenting, dark and brooding and oppressive, and downright dangerous—a mirror for the desperation and blackness that is these characters’ lives.

Other examples of Tasmanian gothic include Richard Flanagan's award-winning novel, *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001), based on the real-life character William Buelow Gould, an artist-forgery incarcerated on the remotest of the remote penal colonies: Sarah Island, also in the rugged southwest and near Macquarie Harbour. The novel is 'a huge phantasmagorical work that combines magical realism, Joycean language and Melvillian intonations to examine the legacy of colonialism' (Kakutani, 2002: n.p.). The play *Chasing a Sound Like Rain* written by playwright Carrie McLean for the Tasmania-Newfoundland Youth Theatre Exchange (TNL, n.d.; *Ten Days*, 2011b), was part of *Ten Days on the Island* in 2010. Based on submissions of poetry, writing, and images from Tasmanian students, the play revolves around seven teenagers who go to the caves at Mole Creek, three hours northwest of the capital Hobart, for an end-of-school party; two mysteriously go missing, alluding to Aboriginal genocide and spirits who still roam the land. The Vogel-winning novel *The Roving Party* (2011) by Rohan Wilson is set in 1829 during a period known as the 'Black Wars'. In it, a band of men, led by bounty-hunter and grazier John Batman, is given the task of capturing and killing Aboriginals who have been terrorising the colonial settlers. Rife with conflict—with the land's first peoples and between (and within) several of the characters themselves—the novel mirrors an unforgiving and cruel landscape that the colonisers must conquer: '... burned onto the face of the country as surely as shapes we branded onto animal stock' (2011: 152). As one reviewer blithely commented, '*The Roving Party* is unlikely to feature in Tasmanian tourism brochures—it's all terror and no beauty, with trees that "groan like the damned", a river that "seeps ... like the discharge from a sore"—and that is as the author intends' (Romei, 2011: n.p.).

The sense of isolation and of being caught in a time warp that are evident in both Newfoundland and Tasmania have contributed to an 'othering' that finds voice in the creative expression of artists from both these islands. In marketing material, these characteristics are portrayed in a positive way: leaving the world behind is the primary aim of an island holiday; getting away from it all to utopia becomes a mantra to which many aspire. But often in art and literature—as in real life—the farther one travels from the everyday, the farther one is from normal social mores, the more likely that utopia becomes dystopia. Strange things have happened (and continue to happen) on these islands; isolation, madness, obsession, lawlessness, and distancing

from ‘the other’ are often the result—*just some of* the more maniacal aspects of ‘islomania’ that occur in Newfoundland and Tasmania.

7.4 Concluding thoughts

What, then, can we take away from the deep spiritual connection people have with their islands, as witnessed through the voices of their artists? That the intimacy of an island craves connection, that the dramatic landscapes, seascapes, and windscares have agency, that the very fact of separation from a mainland creates a special bond that transcends ego-consciousness, resulting in a creativity and metaphor-making that is rooted in a deep spiritual communion with place-that-is-island? As John Gillis (2001: 57) writes, ‘today islands are more likely to be associated with salubrity than with sacrifice, but if we probe beneath the surfaces we find what Eliade would call a “mythical geography”—the only geography man could never do without’, displaying many of the same features of sacredness as the earlier holy and utopian isles. David Weale (2012: n.p.) articulates a similar perspective in different terms:

any kind of earth- or nature-based spirituality always discovers that ‘the holy land’ is right there in the back yard, whereas Christianity, with its emphasis on heaven, de-sacralizes the whole planet. So what we are seeing today in the spirituality of many is a return to paganism. My bias is showing, but for humans I don’t think there is any more powerful metaphor for the Eternal than the ocean. That makes island spirituality especially powerful.

Weale and other writers and island artists like him continue to make art on the edge, where ancient echoes reverberate through the deep time of geology, where increasingly volatile world weather patterns evoke fear—and at the same time pride in having survived yet another ‘weather bomb’—and where close-knit community stemming from these shared experiences thrives. Such tactics manifest in a place that is separate from the mainstream, which feeds a deep spiritual connection to the ‘thin places’ that are islands. At the same time, the more confronting aspects of island living can find their way into art that is dynamic and edgy. Indeed, as Hay (2002b: 81) has written:

If island art embodies a psychological distinctiveness, if it is concerned with a politics of identity, and constructed in reaction to the particular stresses of a hard-edged, bounded existence, it follows that island art should be confrontational, abrasive and often concerned with the negative aspects of existence.

In this respect, Newfoundland's Stan Dragland (2009: 111) notes 'Ferment creates creativity ... determination, anger, the rebellious attitude toward political and cultural centers ... Newfoundland has become a crucible for jangling cultural impulses'. Based on what we have seen, these 'jangling cultural impulses' prevail in Tasmania, too. By extension, on islands—perhaps *particularly* on islands—one can learn about respect for the planet as a whole. In the words of Prince Edward Island poet Milton Acorn (2002: 92), in 'I, Milton Acorn' we learn:

To be born on an island's to be sure
You are native with a habitat.
Growing up on one's good training
For living in a country, on a planet.

Whether islands have this same symbolic presence in non-Western culture is something that merits further exploration. For instance, the Aborigines of Australia's Gulf of Carpentaria do not regard islands as separate entities; rather they see them as one vast entity, 'country', linked by songlines beneath the ocean (Bradley, 2010: n.p.). What of island mythology in Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu cultures? Is the replica of the world, 'World Islands', newly constructed off the coast of Dubai, symbolic of that culture's longstanding attachment to islands, or is the massive real estate project a testament to human ingenuity, greed, and hubris? After all, 'unlike continents, islands, real material ones, can be rented, bought and sold; and in that way prostrate themselves to human imagination' (Baldacchino, 2009: XIV). As our knowledge of our 'world of islands' expands and grows, so, too, will our understanding of the scope of island spirituality. As philosopher Jeff Malpas (2011: n.p.) says, invoking Heidegger's concept of 'the fourfold':

I talked about New Zealand having its own fourfold. But it's not quite the same fourfold you would express just in terms of earth and sky, gods and mortals.

Gods and mortals are there, but there's also a fourfold that encompasses hill and sea, for instance, or mountain and sea. So I think part of what we need is to think about the fourfold that is appropriate to the island.

Meanwhile, people looking for something deeper will continue to seek out islands to fill a void in their lives, where, as researcher Bob Kull (2004: 10)—who spent a year in solitude on a tiny Patagonian island—says, 'the only way out was further in'. And by going farther in, island artists will continue to create work that shores up the island/ocean connections in the realm of the physical, as well as metaphorical.

Chapter 8 Societal islandness

Because of its climate and geography, Newfoundland is ideally suited for the production of alcoholics, royal commissions, snow, unsolvable enigmas, self-pity, mosquitoes and black flies, inferiority complexes, delusions of grandeur, savage irony, impotent malice, unwarranted optimism, entirely justified despair, tall tales, pipe dreams, cannon fodder, children who bear an unnatural resemblance to their grandparents, expatriates (Johnston, 2000: 123).

Johnston's assessment, although deeply sardonic, cuts close to the bone when summing up Newfoundland's story. Yet, despite his pejorative terms, almost to a person the Newfoundland artists I interviewed said they would not live anywhere else. Indeed, sometimes it is *because* of these apparent disadvantages that they would not live anywhere else. They take a certain pride in telling 'just how bad can it be?' stories, which contribute to a sense of community, cohesion, and pride. Yes, it is the physical place—the rugged beauty, ancient rock, striking coastline, and isolated location in the North Atlantic Ocean. Yes, it is the exoticism: it is a commonplace that Newfoundland is different from anywhere else in Canada, and that it has the most distinctive culture in Canada outside of Quebec—evidenced in the literary, musical, and film and television talent that has rocked 'the Rock' in the last thirty or so years. But those same people tell me it is that sense of community, of belonging to a tribe or a kinship web, that keeps them there: the shared hardships and losses and joys; the attitude of 'we're all in this together'. It is a sense of belonging, shaped by an attachment to place, an enfoldment in its stories, and a feeling of being an essential waypoint on that 'subterranean river' to the past—and to the future. And Newfoundlanders carry with them a reputation for being among the most hospitable people in the world. As an acquaintance from Prince Edward Island told me before I went there to do my research, Newfoundland is 'just isolated enough to be real'.

In Tasmania, I heard similar stories. It is 'the pain and the beauty': the pain from a legacy of atrocities nestled amidst the most spectacular scenery imaginable. It, too, is exotic: 'the edge of the end of the world', or 'the literal end of the world: if you travel any further you are on your way home again' (Shakespeare, 2004: 395). It is spectacularly different from its mainland 'overseer' that is the Australian continent.

But it is also a dynamic community—heroes who carved society out of bush and who continue to fight to protect Tasmania’s natural beauty—that keeps and draws new people there. It is the white settler history—recent in comparison with Newfoundland’s over four hundred years of European settlement—yet so distinctive that also draws them there. This is because of the ways in which ‘Van Diemen’s Land’⁴⁹ came to be settled by English, Irish, and Scottish convicts and their jailers, after the colonising powers decimated the Aboriginal population whose ‘country’ it was. It is the determination to overcome generations of stigma—of pain and horror and darkness—to create a place that is vibrant, distinctive, and richly cultural, particularly in the literary and visual arts. As Louise Oxley (2011a: n.p.) says: ‘Tasmania had grown in status ... partly because of strong artistic activity and the green movement. It has become respected and respectable and lost the stigmas that it had had of a small backwater’. Indeed, in 2013, Discover Tasmania’s tourism message was ‘Go behind the scenery’, marketed in a one-minute video showcasing a dynamic contemporary arts and culture scene interwoven with spectacular scenery and culinary delights, underscored by high-energy music and flamboyant costumes (Discover Tasmania, 2013).

Humans have an insatiable need to belong—‘the almost inexpressibly complex experience of culture’ (Cohen, 1982: 16)—to feel valued, to be part of something greater than themselves, even as they seek freedom, independence (releasing their ‘inner cowboy’,⁵⁰ so to speak). By their very nature, islands seem conducive to both

⁴⁹ Tasmania’s original European name was Van Diemen’s Land, bestowed in 1642 by the Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman, in honour of the Governor of the Dutch East Indies. In 1856, the name was changed to Tasmania, ostensibly to erase the stigma of convictism thought to be carried by the original name (Boyce, 2010: 1).

⁵⁰ When I first compared islanders to cowboys, I thought I was saying something original. But then, on February 25, 2014, a new Canadian reality television show called *Cold Water Cowboys* premiered, featuring six Newfoundland fishermen who have continued to make a living from the sea after the cod moratorium was declared in 1992. Promotional copy reads: ‘A vocation passed from father to son, the fishermen of “The Rock” have spanned generations ... Many left the life of the sea ... but not the COLD WATER COWBOYS. This original Canadian ten-part series journeys to Newfoundland to meet these men with salt water in their veins ...’ (Discovery: n.p.).

rugged individualism *and* communal living: over centuries of enduring the most extreme conditions, islanders have learned to work together to survive. Péron (2004: 330) calls it an ‘*art de vivre*, sharing an ethos that is both private and communal’. Because of the autonomy that comes from separation and isolation, islanders are necessarily resilient: comparatively unfettered by bureaucratic red tape, they can often change direction quickly in order to take advantage of new opportunities—individually and collectively. Their porous boundaries allow communion with the world, while solidity and pride of place pull wayward sons and daughters back home.

In attempting to generate a list of characteristics shared by islanders, George Putz (1984: 16), founding editor of Maine’s *Island Journal*, created the following list based on an intimate knowledge of Maine islanders. Like Johnston’s list at the top of the chapter, it is filled with ‘savage irony’, yet cognisant of the seeming opposites inherent in islandness:

Independence—small boats and social circles demand it if a personality is to survive. Loyalty—ultimate mutual care and generosity, even between ostensible enemies. A strong sense of honor, easily betrayed. Polydextrous and multifaceted competence, interlaced with vigilant cooperation. Traditional frugality with bursts of spectacular exception. Earthy common sense. Opinionated machismo in both the male and female mode. Live-and-let-live tolerance of eccentricity. Fragile discretion within a welter of gossip. Highly individualized blends of spirituality and superstition. A complex oral tradition, with long memories fueled by a mix of responsible record keeping and nostalgia. And finally, a canny literacy and intelligence.

It almost goes without saying that at the top of Putz’s list should be the capacity to not take oneself too seriously—perhaps in reaction to the black comedy that comes from teetering on the edge, often between life and death, that is the stuff of life on islands. And even though Johnston’s list is quite Newfoundland-specific while Putz’s is more generalized to islanders beyond the shores of Maine, both touch on similar themes: the push and pull between pride and inferiority complexes by eccentric personalities, fuelled by a fierce attachment to place and liberal doses of story.

This chapter, then, explores the societal boundedness of islands as seen through artists and their work. Social boundedness can be a positive reinforcer of islandness, exhibited through symbols of pride and cultural confidence; or it can be negative, whereby inferiority complexes and ‘cultural cringe’ are the norm—the result of a closed mindset and generations of being subjugated by the mainland. It can be a demonstration of the insider/outsider mentality, where tribalism is at once good and bad, and where ‘gatekeepers’ abound. But, at the same time, islanders are resilient: they have learned how to cope, by holding fast to customs and traditions while adapting to new influences from outside; by seeing life as a comedy of the absurd; or by escaping the neighbours by periodically going ‘round the Bay’ or to ‘the shack’. And running throughout is the theme of story: the tie that binds.

8.1 *The ties that bind*

*from ‘Wayne Johnston talks about the weather’
(for Wayne Johnston)*

...
*There are two animating myths of Newfoundland.
One is that we’re better than everyone else,
and the other is that we’re worse than everyone else.
It’s like you take a certain pride
in coming from a small remote place.
But you apologize.*

*Yet if anyone criticizes or makes fun,
there’s this fierce sense of grievance.
Two warring aspects in the same collective mind.*

Because of their maritime location and geographical boundedness, islands may be more conducive to creating a stronger identity than any other geographically defined place. A bold statement, to be sure, but, as Hay (2006: 22) writes, those

who stress the hard-edgedness of the shoreline also tend to emphasize the contribution such a heightened sense of physical containment makes to the construction of an island identity ... The strong sense of island identity stemming from the sharpness of that wave-lined boundary is often said to consist in the community-defining bond of a shared sense of isolation that

generates a ‘unique sense of difference to other populations’. Islophiles tend to extol this sense of insularity; to see it as a source of islander resilience and versatility, and a state of existence to be cherished.

Like Hay, Péron (2004: 330) sees the maritime boundary as a constant, ‘solid, totalizing and domineering, tightening the bonds between the island folk, who thus experience a stronger sense of closeness and solidarity’. Newfoundland’s Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.) deems this island ‘containment’ as crucial to identity-making. In places on the mainland, she says, borders are more arbitrary, whereas, in Newfoundland, ‘there’s nothing terribly arbitrary about ninety miles of water. Sense of containment, cohesiveness, separateness, otherness, and stuff like that make us more aware of our own stories’.⁵¹ Because the island of Newfoundland is isolated from mainland North America by ‘ninety miles of water’, its half-million inhabitants are keenly aware of one another’s stories through a tightly woven web of personal and community relations that span five centuries of habitation. Doyle also notes that Newfoundlanders seem to know the rest of the island as well as they know their own communities—and are very attached to both through their own personal knowledge, and the stories that are elicited with each mention of a place:

Newfoundland is very big physically, but I can go somewhere tonight to a party where I don’t know anyone. If I start talking about rivers and fishing, boating, camping, islands off the little islands, Newfoundlanders know more. They say, ‘yes, my grandmother is from Harbour Breton and this one’s from

⁵¹ For a different perspective that views the ocean as a road rather than a barrier, one finds similarities between the views of Epeli Hau’ofa in the South Pacific (see Chapter 3) and Charles Martijn’s research into how Newfoundland’s first inhabitants, the Mi’kmaq, viewed their homeland. Their traditional area comprised of up to 122,000 km² of land and sea, from the Gaspé of Quebec through Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Maine, up to Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island through to the southern part of the island of Newfoundland. Martijn writes: ‘It is difficult for us to realize today that the Mi’kmaq once had a unified vision of this traditional homeland, whose eastern sector constituted a domain of islands linked, not separated, by stretches of water, like the Cabot Strait, which served as connecting highways for canoe travel’ (Martijn, 2003: 49).

here’. ‘And I’ve been on that river’. ‘Do you know that road?’ ‘Yes, I know that road, that dirt road’. I don’t think you have those conversations elsewhere.

In repeated tellings, the interrelatedness of place and story becomes more tightly woven as connections are made, creating a sense of cohesion and inclusion among the conversation’s participants, and drawing in the outsider—in this case, Doyle—until she feels a part of the conversation, too. The stories layer to create each person’s sense of belonging, and identity, contributing to what Hay calls this ‘unique sense of difference’.

These differences can be seen in any number of other ways, too. For instance, the equalizing effect or democratization that comes from living in a small community is prevalent on a small island. Says Newfoundland’s Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.):

There doesn’t seem to be as much of a sense of hierarchy. Everybody in St John’s is thrown together, so the politicians, the CBC radio people you meet, you can get to know. Nobody’s too big for their britches. I felt there was a sense of co-operation and mutual respect and encouragement which you don’t always find. A writer and psychologist friend ... when asked ‘How come?’ said: ‘Well, we live on an island. We have to take care of each other’.

The water boundary and exposure to extreme climate on this island bind people together, creating a caring society that comes from that will to survive. There is a levelling that stems from watching out for your neighbour; whether you are a judge or a fisherman, your community standing has no bearing when your very survival is threatened. While the geography of certain islands may create an ethos of ‘taking care of one another’, writer Don McKay (2012: n.p.) identifies this as a ‘generalized reciprocity’ similar to that found in landlocked Saskatchewan’s co-operative movement: ‘If it was just ordinary reciprocity, I would help you out because you would help me later. But generalized reciprocity is you give to the whole community. You need something and I don’t even know you, but I just help out. That, I think, comes about partly because of the extremity of the place’. While Newfoundland and Saskatchewan share extreme weather, lifestyles that derive historically from the land and sea, and ties that are perhaps closer to the rural lifestyle where such reciprocity is necessary for survival, islanders have the added sense of containment that comes

from being bound by water: ‘the omnipresence of the sea intensifies the feeling of being cut off from the rest of the world’ (Péron, 2004: 330). On very small islands, such as Fogo Island, this intensity is felt particularly keenly as threats to survival are heightened, and fewer people in a more tightly bounded space are even more dependent on one another. Painter Adam Young (2012: n.p.) experienced this first-hand when he arrived on Fogo Island from the mainland. He was struck by how people help others without wanting anything in return, observing: ‘When you come here, you feel like you need to even out the odds. Like, someone went out of their way to do this for me, I’ve gotta do something in return. But that was never their intention. It’s just not in their nature to not [help out]’.

St John’s storyteller Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) attributes a strong island identity to the sense of community; to tribalism and strong kinship webs, particularly in the cashless economies of smaller towns and outports where individuals were dependent upon the merchants who bought their fish: ‘People sort of lived in a permanent state of debt to the merchant class. In order to survive in times of great hardship, you needed to be able to rely on your neighbour’. The poverty that so many experienced in the fisheries-dependent outport communities bound people together against the merchant class, ‘linked by family, generations of people living in the same place, intermarrying. You are tied here to a place, you are tied to a geography that has its own rich series of stories that go with it’. Decades later, as the fishery changed and merchants lost their power, and increasing numbers of people relocated to the urban centres, that small community cohesiveness remains. It has even carried over to the metropolitan area of St John’s and its population of 196,966 (Statistics Canada, 2011), which residents call ‘one giant outport’: everyone seems to know one another, and look out for one another, particularly when united against a common enemy—which could be anything from a severe winter storm to a maritime disaster to government policies dictated from central Canada.

Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) highlights Newfoundlanders’ sense of tribalism by contrasting it with the individualism found on islands on Canada’s west coast. On Newfoundland, a sense of islandness stems in part from a community and culture

that have existed for centuries, and which was once an independent colony, whereas settlement on British Columbia's Vancouver and Gulf Islands is much more recent.⁵² He attributes Gulf Islanders' sense of islandness to 'being different from the next island over, but I don't think there's a sense of cultural nationalism associated with [their] islandness'. Newfoundland's five centuries of settlement and history as an independent country contribute to this 'cultural nationalism', contrasting sharply with the Gulf Islands which were settled relatively recently and which, depending on which island you are on, may not enjoy even municipal jurisdictional status within British Columbia. However, Crummey correctly notices the fierce independence these islands have from the mainland, from the big island of Vancouver Island, and from one another—creating 'degrees of islandness' the farther out you go.⁵³

Similarly, in Tasmania, that sense of community is important to people's sense of place. Says writer Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.), 'Here, they don't forget anything. I have grown up soaked in this big community memory, with the idea that what you do now will never go away because this is where you live and whatever you do is going to have continuing consequences'. Being part of that community has been crucial to her happiness as an adult, particularly after living in Western Australia while attending university. She says:

It wasn't my place. I found that people weren't as warm, and I felt there was a conversation going on here that I wasn't part of. I didn't like not being a part of it. And I'm not even talking about influencing it, necessarily. I just couldn't bear being out of earshot, the feeling that my home was going on without me.

⁵² When European explorers and fur traders first arrived in Canada's Pacific Northwest in the mid-1800s, the area was home to several First Nations tribes, whose lands and traditional ways of life were ultimately compromised by white settlers. Land treaties continue to be negotiated with the Federal government. Comparing West Coast First Nations peoples' attitudes toward islands with those in Tasmania and Australia, as well as with those on Canada's east coast, would be worthy of further exploration.

⁵³ Indeed, many of the artists on these outer islands are perceived to be more eccentric/ex-centric, farther from the centre, than the ones closer to the mainland. I explore this notion of 'degrees of islandness' in my paper, 'Stepping Stones to the Edge: Artistic expression in an ocean of islands' (Brinklow, 2013).

Being part of the ‘conversation’ is being part of Tasmania’s ‘community memory’, which provides Wood with an important sense of belonging and identity. She says, ‘it takes a particular kind of courage to really put down your roots in one spot and say, “this is who I am, this is where I am”, and know that everything you do on that patch is going to matter’. Wood is now firmly enfolded in Tasmania’s cultural community. She has become ‘part of the conversation’ by writing Tasmania’s stories through her novels and academic articles, and by teaching creative writing at the University of Tasmania.

Poet Louise Oxley (2011a: n.p.), however, originally chafed at being ‘placed’ in her society. As the daughter of a prominent journalist and editor of *The Mercury* from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, Oxley found that everyone seemed to know who she was, which in her early twenties, ‘was a bit of a curse. I felt a bit labelled by that: “oh, you must be one of Dennis’ daughters, or you must be one of the Hawker girls. Which one are you? Oh you’re the middle one”’. But after years of living away and then returning home, she has come to recognise how important lineage is to life in Tasmania:

I remember saying once, ‘when I think about Tasmania, everyone begins with a short biography’. [Y]ou’d mention someone’s name, and [my mother]’d say, ‘now, her mother was a Cameron from Mona Vale, outside Campbell Town’, or ‘I think that family used to live up the street, and I think her father was a psychiatrist, and I think that she was at school with you, only she might have been a couple years ahead’. And then she’d say the name. For me that was very Tasmanian. Everybody came with some kind of connection, and names were an indication of that connection.

Although the ability to make these connections, to ‘carry people’s lineages in their heads’, is something that most small communities share, it is particularly acute within the bounded space that is an island—oft-times exacerbated by isolation, deep roots, and long memories. Through these stories and connections, Oxley now feels fortunate to be able to trace her family lineage back to convict days:

My mother’s grandfather was the Lord Mayor of Hobart. But what wasn’t said was that *his* father [Samuel Crisp] was a convict who’d been sentenced to be

hanged in the Old Bailey for stealing a sheep, and then transported. He ended up at Birches' Bay, which was a convict's sawing station. He got his ticket of leave quite early, and in the end, Samuel Crisp was respected by the community. That to me is quite a Tasmanian story. Now that I go back to the Channel area a lot, and back to that family farm, I've started to enjoy the connections that I've found. The fact that he was the local baker in that region becomes a placing.

Oxley recognises that placing herself in the Channel area through her convict ancestor gives her a credibility that she might not otherwise have; the ghost of Samuel Crisp has, in effect, given her an 'in' into the community, demonstrating the binding power of memory and story in Tasmania.

8.2 'Big fish in a little pond'

On islands such as Tasmania and Newfoundland, with relatively small populations and thus fewer people to carry out the work of creating and maintaining community, the incidence of role diffusion and polyvalency⁵⁴ are high (Baldacchino, 2005b: 36). As Putz described, islanders are renowned for having 'polydextrous and multifaceted competence' out of necessity: people step into positions of authority or make names for themselves because no one else has come forward. How people rise to the top on islands can be compared on a metaphoric level with island biogeography (Clark, 2004): like the gigantism attributed to evolutionary processes on islands (Quammen, 1996), big personalities abound on islands; on an island, things are writ large. This tendency is colloquially called being a 'big fish in a little pond'. Because of the bounded size and tightly woven character of the island community, these 'big fish'

⁵⁴ According to Baldacchino (2005b: 356), 'A complex web of acquaintances, contacts and networks emerges among societies where there is role diffusion (individuals agree, or are obliged, to work beyond their job description); role enlargement (individuals have more space for innovation at work because of leaner hierarchies and often absent superordinates); and role multiplicity (where individuals wear many hats and practise polyvalency)'.

rise to the top. What Rachelle Chinnery (2013: n.p.) called ‘upperlessness’ (in Chapter 5) can be taken from the personal to the societal level.

For example, Newfoundland’s Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.) began her dance career in St John’s. She says, ‘I’m one of the grandmothers of Canadian dance in Newfoundland. It was smothering, at some points in my life, to be a big fish, or a medium fish, in a small pond’. After a few years she left for Montreal to pursue further training and a successful career, but ‘after a while in Montreal I was too small a fish. It came to a point that I had more visibility coming from St John’s than I did in Montreal’. The realization that she could do more in St John’s as that ‘big fish’ led her back home again. Through her production company, Docudance, she interviews ordinary people about their lives, capturing the stories and distinctive accents, then retelling them through her one-woman dance performances. She is able to capitalise on Newfoundland’s distinctive cultural richness that is often judged ‘exotic’ in other cultures, bringing more attention to Newfoundland culture than she would if she were still in Montreal. Her performances about Newfoundlanders have taken her across Canada, as well as to Europe, Iceland, New York, Australia, and Brazil.

In a similar way, Tasmanian artist David Keeling (2011: n.p.) feels that ‘if you have a good idea, it can get to the top very quickly. If the right people are in power, and they have the right sentiment, a good idea can really generate good things’. Coming from Tasmania is a huge advantage in the art world, he says; it leads to Tasmania often ‘punching above its weight’ on the art stage. ‘It’s no coincidence that in a lot of areas we lead Australia’, says Keeling, ‘and sometimes the world’.

Musician and composer Carey Lewincamp (2011: n.p.) appreciates the instant recognition that comes from living in a small community, and recognises that his reputation has become ‘bigger’ than it would have if he lived on the mainland. He says:

I think because my music is so identifiable that people in Tasmania go, ‘That’s Cary’. And because it’s a small island, there are enough people, a sort of critical mass, [who say,] ‘yeah, that’s his music, I recognise that’. So, therefore, I become part of Tasmania’s identity in music. Could I do that in Sydney or Melbourne? Probably not. I’d certainly have a core of people that

like my music, because it gets played on national radio. But here it becomes bigger.

For Lewincamp, this process has been an important iterative or mutually reinforcing one, where being associated with a Tasmanian identity has led to more opportunities to have his music played on the mainland, which leads to greater recognition within Tasmania.

In turn, Louise Oxley (2011a: n.p.) feels ‘it is possible to do things’ since she knows so many people in a small community. She says, ‘because it feels smallish, it doesn’t feel so huge that it goes way beyond you’. She experienced the benefit of being a ‘big fish in a little pond’ in the school system:

I went to a private girls’ school with a population of three hundred students from kindergarten right through to grade twelve. But in that school there was somehow the idea, the ethos, that no matter what you wanted to do, it was possible to do things. In that school it was taken for granted that girls would be able to do what boys did. It wasn’t even an issue. You feel it’s possible; the world’s small enough to feel it’s possible.

Admittedly, Oxley’s upbringing was more privileged than some, but she recognised that being part of a smaller community afforded her more opportunities than if she were in a larger one.

When composer Don Kay (2011: n.p.) and his family left England in 1964, where he had studied music composition for five years, he chose Hobart over Sydney—for the natural beauty and the size of the community. He also knew that this was where he wanted to make a contribution. He says: ‘Now we have a flourishing little compositional community here and I feel that I was part of the start of all that. Before that, before the 60s, music education in Tassie was very arid and scarce’. Being able to bring in new ideas and create something from nothing is an accomplishment for which Kay is proud:

I think I was the only one around here who felt that it was terribly important that young people regard music as an exploratory, sound-making means of expression, not something [where] you learned instruments to play other

people's music all the time. That helped me build up my own relevance and confidence.

Like Lewincamp, the process of teaching and giving back to Tasmania has been mutually reinforcing for Kay.

Isolating conditions are ripe for creating not just big fish in little ponds, but also larger-than-life characters and circumstances. For instance, as Don McKay (2012: n.p.) notes, several of Canada's west-coast Gulf Islands have developed 'a real sort of outlaw mythology. Actual outlaws, apparently from the States, stayed there, fugitives from justice, and they became barons of the islands'. Many of these fugitives were well-educated Americans avoiding conscription into the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They found refuge on out-of-the-way islands on both Canadian coasts. That they have gone on to become 'barons of the islands' is partly due to their education and left-leaning political sensibilities, the timing of their arrival, and the fact that opportunities to succeed were there.

On many islands, the hard edge of the shore works to tighten 'the bonds between island folk, who thus experience a stronger sense of closeness and solidarity' (Péron, 2004: 330). This tightening can press inward until the contents push to the top, perhaps manifesting in emotions such as passion and anger or love; or community solidarity that can border on something akin to nationalism—but instead of 'for country', that sense of nationalism is for their island.⁵⁵ Part of this is due to the extreme conditions that come with living so close to the ocean. People who have survived—and thrived, often in the most appalling conditions—what Don McKay (2012: n.p.) calls 'the bleakness of it, the hardness, the extremity of it, the hard-scrabble existence'—take pride in knowing that they've made it through yet another trial; it is just another test of one's mettle. For instance, not only does the weather give Tasmanians something to talk about, with its 'changeability and its wildness' (Oxley, 2011a: n.p.), but 'it does become something special to us'. Hay's words

⁵⁵ Indeed, a further area of study would be exploring when, particularly on divided islands or sovereign islands, the sense of islandness trumps nationalism, and vice-versa.

‘extol’ and ‘cherished’ reinforce the confidence or swagger that comes from being that little bit more ‘special’ for having lived to tell the tale.

8.3 Newfoundland's dual character

Islands can be stereotyped as insular, which is what Joan Marshall (1999: 96) calls a complex idea that incorporates distance, centre-periphery relationships, technology, political and economic decisions, external and internal information flows, physical characteristics such as topography, soils and climate affecting the resource base, and social and cultural patterns ... Insularity is as much a state of mind as it is an objective reality.

Because the word derives from ‘insula’, which is Latin for ‘island’, the concept of insularity can be seen as a positive that ‘incorporate[s] strong co-operative relations, survival skills, loyalty, and value of equity and justice’ (Marshall 1999: 96). To be called insular is a tautology: insular people *do* live on an island. However, ‘insularity’ is most often meant pejoratively, as a way to describe a parochial mindset that resists change and mistrusts outsiders.

This mistrust is often of the mainland. In Newfoundland, being the butt of ‘Newfie jokes’—one of Johnston’s (2012: n.p.) ‘most hated words’—creates a ‘kind of fierce sense of grievance if anyone criticizes or makes fun’. This grievance is akin to an inferiority complex, with chip firmly planted on shoulder from wounds inflicted by the ‘powers that be’—usually some mainland ‘other’ that considers the island to be another chip: this time, a ‘chip off the old block’ (McCusker & Soares, 2011: xi). For example, in Bernice Morgan’s novel *Waiting for Time* (1994: 66), an ‘outside consultant’ from Texas has been flown in to do damage control after the *Ocean Ranger* disaster. He says to his co-workers, ‘Newfies got bigger chips on their shoulders than niggers!’⁵⁶ Yet, island communities can be a tough chip to crack as

⁵⁶ At which point, Alice, a career administrative assistant from Newfoundland who has been working for the federal government for years, ‘stands up and announces that she is going home before the Newfie jokes start’ (1994: 66).

some islanders feel duty-bound to judge just who should and should not be part of ‘the club’.

It is not easy being deemed a ‘psychological sink into which elements of the collective national disquiet can be displaced’ (as Hay, 2003: 555, characterises Tasmania). In both Newfoundland and Tasmania, this displacement of guilt has roots in the way the colonisers treated and ultimately killed the original inhabitants (the Beothuks and the Aborigines, respectively); covered up and ignored the atrocities for generations; and settled the islands with the poorest of the poor: Newfoundland with Irish and Scots who fled the poverty and class systems of their home countries to eke out lives in the fishery; and Tasmania with ‘the most felonious of felons’ (Shakespeare, 2004: 28).

In Newfoundland, the fishery’s ‘truck’ system created systemic poverty amongst the fishers who often lived in the most isolated outports, and wealth among the merchant class who mostly lived in St John’s or even in England. Because of these feudal-like conditions, as well as a heavy Newfoundland accent unintelligible to most Canadians, Newfoundlanders were thought to be stupid and backward, resulting in ‘Newfie jokes’, which were often borrowed from other cultures; one merely swaps in the ethnic group whom one wishes to slur. In reality, many of the early immigrants to Newfoundland were caught up in the British class system they had tried to escape. Many continued to be impoverished and uneducated even after they immigrated. Andy Jones (2012: n.p.) remembers how Newfoundlanders were treated by other Canadians when he was growing up in the 1950s and 60s and went to ‘Canada’: ‘that first-time shock of going to the mainland and people laughing just because you were from Newfoundland ... like the mayor of Toronto saying, “stop people from Newfoundland from coming here anymore”’. Jones remembers being told constantly that Newfoundlanders were not as good as everybody else because they were not part of the dominant culture—in this case Canadian, American, or British. At the same time, he says, ‘we knew that we had a great past, and a great present’. Feeling unwelcome in your own country and being the butt of jokes diminished Newfoundlanders’ sense of self, fuelling what Wayne Johnston (2009: 21–22) calls

two animating myths of Newfoundland. The first and most evident one derives from a sense of grievance and great pride ... In other words, Newfoundlanders believe themselves to be an intrinsically great people who, throughout their history, have been wrongfully prevented from enjoying the spoils of their greatness. The other animating myth—and it is one that is rarely acknowledged in any quarter—is that Newfoundlanders are intrinsically inferior to other peoples of the world and have therefore been the authors of their own misfortunes.

To underscore his point, Johnston (2012: n.p.) describes Joey Smallwood, Newfoundland's first Premier, who brought the province into Confederation in 1949: 'The first thing he would do if he had a visitor was apologize for what Newfoundland was like, for what it looked like, for what people sounded like, for what he perceived as the ignorance and insularity. At the same time, he was collecting what is still the largest Newfoundland library in the world'. Johnston notes that this 'sometimes destructive division of the psyche' is not unique to Newfoundland. He thinks islands 'are very typical of that. You go to Ireland and they're so proud of the place. But if you scratch the surface a little bit they'll start running themselves down'. That the division of the psyche was 'destructive' to islanders' sense of self in the 1950s and 1960s is evidenced in the factions that divided along primarily pro- and anti-Confederation lines. The Confederation story is a defining weave in Newfoundland's narrative cloth: it colours much of the Newfoundland story even today. Loss of independence to Canada, and recognition as the only country in the world to willingly give up its sovereign status without bloodshed, has left a mark on its people. Joey Smallwood is both lauded and vilified for bringing Newfoundland into Confederation. 'Joe was responsible for putting more food on more tables, more clothes on more backs and more hope into more hearts than any other man in Newfoundland history', says Gregory Power, a retired politician in St John's (Momatiuk, 1998: 83). In contrast, Wayne Johnston's relatives called Smallwood a 'bow-tie wearing despot' who had 'led Newfoundlanders to it [Confederation] and tempted them to partake of it as surely as the serpent had led Eve to the apple',

resulting in a fall from grace which was ‘the paradise of independence’ (Johnston, 1999: 182–3). This polarisation pitted family against family, friends against friends, and ‘townies’ against ‘baymen’.⁵⁷

Generations after the colony became a province of Canada, Newfoundlanders continue to debate the issue; and many use ‘Newfoundlander’ as their primary identifier instead of ‘Canadian’ (Hiller, 2007: 130). Some believe that Newfoundland nationalism ‘has a more negative tone, a fascination with conspiracy theories about how Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were tricked into joining Canada, how Canada has not done enough for the province, and how provincehood has undermined cultural identity, blighted the economy, and forced people to leave’ (Cadigan 2009, 288). Newfoundland art curator Bruce Johnson (2012: n.p.) notes:

July 1 here is Memorial Day, until noon, then it’s Canada Day: two nationalities at play. In the morning you see the tri-colours, it’s our official November 11, a very nationalistic, strong memory of something that happened ninety-odd years ago. And then at noon, all the Canadian flags go up, and people barbecue and drink ... I also think it’s kind of a culture of eulogy. Its litany of the past is part of the culture.

Newfoundland, says Don McKay (2012: n.p.), ‘absolutely maintains that character of independence. Newfoundland has independence in a kind of real spiritual way. It’s de facto its own country, no doubt about it’. But, for many artists, this sense of nationalism fuels art in a way that only perceived injustice can. Andy Jones (2012: n.p.) is one such artist who has done just that:

⁵⁷ ‘Townies’ are considered to be from St John’s, or from the Avalon Peninsula, which voted 52 per cent in favour of Confederation. ‘Baymen’ are those from rural Newfoundland. ‘Beyond the overpass’ (part of the TransCanada Highway that comes into St John’s) is another distinction between townies and baymen. Similarly, ‘the latte line’ distinguishes the working-class suburbs in Hobart’s north (unofficially the line is said to be Creek Road, near the New Town/Moonah ‘border’) from the rest of the city.

We had to prove somehow to Canadians that we were worth it, that joining Canada was worth it to them, that we had brought a great culture, great resources, and great people. My Newfoundland became a kind of political cause for our generation ... that we had survived incredibly well, and people were smart and clever and creative and hard-working. That made us special in a way, and because of our unique situation in the world—where we were situated—we had produced lots of art and lots of local culture. It was almost a religious sort of fervour we had about Newfoundland.

Seeing oneself as not being as good as the dominant culture yet feeling that criticism from outside is unjust is a recipe for creating ‘underdogs’, but, in the time-honoured tradition of stories with happy endings, the underdog fights back, and sometimes wins. Jones was part of the Newfoundland comedy troupe CODCO (short for ‘Cod Company’), which had a regular television show of the same name that aired on CBC TV from 1987 to 1992. With roots in a theatre production called ‘Cod on a stick’, which satirized Canadians’ stereotypes of Newfoundlanders, CODCO’s skits made fun of Canadians and Newfoundlanders alike, taking on political issues such as the fishery, the corruption and sex scandals emanating from the Roman Catholic Church, homophobia, racism, politicians, and even the iconic *Anne of Green Gables*. Instead of being from bucolic Prince Edward Island, ‘Anne of Green Gut’ was from a rugged and isolated Newfoundland outport. Jones goes on to say:

We had a strong enough culture that we could make fun of ourselves, and we could make fun of other people, too: equal opportunity fun-making. We weren’t saying that we should leave Canada. We were just so utterly unbelievably fascinated by Newfoundland. God, what an incredible place, what incredible accents, storytelling, voices, turns of phrase, attitudes to life, to death, to mental illness. Being self-sufficient, doing things because they had to be done, creating on the moment. Thousands of men built beautiful boats, taught by their fathers. Women who do quilting and make stuff, and grow all the vegetables—all those stories. It was like, why didn’t Canada get that? Why couldn’t they? Our job, somebody said, was to tell people. And to say this is why we love it. We did you a favour by joining, more than you did us a favour.

Indeed, as Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.) notes, Newfoundlanders continue to be unapologetic about their culture. He cites a satirical radio program called ‘The Great Eastern’, which was broadcast on national CBC radio from 1994 to 1999. Steeped in Newfoundland culture, the program brought music and stories to the rest of Canada. Says Dragland:

They’re sending this across the country and across the world, and they never compromised about their local references. Some you wouldn’t have a clue what they were about. [But] that’s the brilliance of it. It has to do with the importance of the local in any literature. If you’re deeply rooted in any particular place, chances are a reader will respond to that as much as to the story.

Finding universal truth in stories that focus on the particular is evident in literature from both Newfoundland and Tasmania, captured in this comment from another islander, Cape Breton writer Alistair MacLeod (1984: n.p.): ‘if you feel strongly about a place emotionally, then that sort of becomes your place and then you give your best to it ... if you do your region or your particular place very well, what happens next is that it becomes universally understood’. MacLeod’s international-award-winning and oft-translated short stories and novel about life on Cape Breton Island are rich in local references that transcend geographical boundaries.

Writer Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.) thinks that Newfoundland still exhibits signs of being colonised ‘in the way that people will still defer to somebody from somewhere else. If I meet someone who knows way more than I do: good, I’ll defer. But I don’t want to defer to somebody just because they’re from away’. Doyle is frustrated by seeing people bowing to ideas from outside just because they think that newer is always better: ‘We’ve got to put skywalks and pedwalks down on Duckworth Street because they’ve got them somewhere else’. The premiers who have made those types of decisions are now being asked by writer and Memorial University sociologist Doug House (2012: n.p.) to document the changes in Newfoundland’s political landscape since Confederation by describing their main contributions: ‘Almost all of them say that it’s helping to develop the self-confidence and the identity of people in the province’. He notes that Smallwood himself said the same thing, but that others

who came along afterward criticized him as ‘being exactly the opposite’. He notes, too, that Danny Williams, Newfoundland and Labrador’s Premier from 2003 to 2010, will probably be best-remembered in Canada for his fight against the federal government in 2004. On 23rd December, Williams ordered all Canadian flags in that province to be removed in protest against the federal government’s reneging on a campaign promise while negotiating oil revenues in the Atlantic Accord, a deal between the two governments that would manage offshore oil and gas resources. After decades in which Newfoundland and Labrador’s resources were perceived to be ‘given away’ to the federal government, the province’s people felt this was a monumental victory. As Lisa Moore says in the film, *Hard Rock and Water* (Doran, 2005: n.p.), ‘we’ve been kicked too long and kicked too hard, and now we’re kicking back’. The film ends with the memorable line, ‘we’ve not been fighting to get out of Confederation, we’ve been fighting to get in’. House notes that the combination of Williams’ assertiveness and the fact that ‘he happened to come in at a time when we were starting to get money in the province, gave him the means ... to kick back’.

Although Dragland (2012: n.p.) respects the reasons for Newfoundlanders’ sense of ‘nationalism’, he also thinks that getting beyond the grievances of the past is a healthy thing: ‘When you get past that, you don’t worry about it so much, you take it whether you like it or dislike it. The strength of the writing and oblivion to these issues of national identity and so on, that’s postcolonial, that’s mature’. He notes that some of the new writing coming out of Newfoundland reflects the postmodern sensibility while still remaining grounded in place. And Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.) is optimistic about Newfoundlanders’ perception of themselves today as a proud and distinct culture, even while urging some restraint; after all, one does not want to be perceived as what David Weale (2012: n.p.) in his book *Them Times* (1992: 57) calls ‘big feelin’:

People are really excited because they’re feeling like we’ve come into our own. There’s a weight that comes with that, and a pride—it kind of feeds itself. We’ve reached certain places on world stages, and we can speak strongly for ourselves. But everybody’s talking about how we’ve got to maintain our modesty, too. We’ve reached a certain level, but we’re still small potatoes in a lot of ways.

As artists use their artistic abilities to showcase their island culture, the results can have a reinforcing effect on how people view themselves as either victimized or as a self-determined society. Françoise Enguehard (2012: n.p.) notes that it will take time to value one's own art, particularly after centuries of isolation and receiving art from elsewhere:

It takes a while for a small society like that to realise that there is no magic to it, and they are not superior people who send us their art. It takes a while to decide, that, 'hey, I can do that, too'. I think it's just taking stock that you don't need to look outside. You've gone outside, you've looked, you've suffered somebody else's culture being pushed on you, then all of a sudden you say, well, you can do it.

Enguehard's 2010 novel, *L'Archipel du Dr Thomas* (published in English in 2012 as *The Islands of Dr Thomas*), is one example of art as a catalyst for identity creation. While stationed in St Pierre, a military doctor took thousands of photographs of St Pierre and its people. Enguehard says:

before [Dr Thomas' photos], people would come and would take [photos of] the officials and the ladies and the governor and everybody else with their nice dresses, but they could have cared less about the real people. [When] we discovered all of his work, I think we saw ourselves as we had never seen ourselves before: as beautiful people in everyday occurrences, curing capelin, dressing cod, fishing for whelks, and just rowing, having fun, cutting ice, shoveling snow ...

Through the literal lens of an outsider who had seen the intrinsic beauty and radiance of St Pierre and its people in everyday situations, Enguehard and fellow islanders finally saw themselves as beautiful, and said, 'why not? If he could do it, we can. Photography was the first thing in St Pierre. Painting followed. Music. And writing was the last'. Seeing one's stories reflected back through art is a powerful way of creating pride and identity, and Enguehard saw how it directly manifested into more artistic production. Similarly, the Fogo Process (described in Chapter 6) is another example of islanders seeing themselves reflected through film, which resulted in the island successfully resisting their forced resettlement. Indeed, Carol Penton (2012:

n.p.) named her newspaper *The Fogo Island Flame* as a reminder of the strength of conviction and tenacity needed to persevere: ‘Fogo Islanders were given a choice to burn their boats, sink or swim. We chose the latter, and we continue to swim—in very rough waters most of the time. I thought the title was symbolic like a torch of sorts, to be passed along, to continue swimming in those rough waters’. The newspaper, which was published from 2005 until 2011, showcased stories and photographs of Fogo Island—past and present—ensuring that Fogo Islanders’ voices continue to be heard.

The telling and retelling of stories created a snowball effect on St Pierre and Fogo Island, reinforcing cultural norms until people’s sense of identity and self-worth became evident to outsiders and helped to change attitudes. A similar process can be discerned within Newfoundland itself. Canadians have come to recognise the ingenuity of Newfoundlanders’ survival adaptations to the harshest of conditions, and the grace, humour, and openness that they have evinced in doing so. However, says Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.), these perceptions are still evolving and the task to change people’s minds about Newfoundland is not complete:

[T]here’s still plenty of it out there. I remember going to see a young guy, Ian Foster. He’s got a couple albums out and he plays around town. He wrote a song because he had had a bunch of experiences where people had expressed opinions about Newfoundland that seemed impossible for people to hold anymore, but there they were. And they were all the same old hillbilly, backward, stupid, Newfie, stereotypes. [But they were] surprised by him, having expected something completely different because he was a Newfoundlander.

Even now, stereotypes of Newfoundlanders exist, though writers and artists, musicians and filmmakers, still persist in having their voices heard.

8.4 Tasmania’s ‘cultural cringe’

In Tasmania, the feeling that ‘nothing is ever as good as it is on the mainland’ has come to be known as ‘cultural cringe’. As Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.), says, ‘I think a lot of people grow up dissing Tasmania, and thinking that it’s the asshole of the end

of nowhere'. 'Cultural cringe', like Newfoundland's 'inferiority complex' is due, in part, to what Andrew Harwood (2010: 72) calls 'The Tasmanian Problem', whereby Australia's only island state is 'typically represented as an economically dysfunctional, regionally fragmented and demographically declining basket-case'. It is understandable that you will become defensive when you are told repeatedly that you are not as good as the rest of the country; that you are responsible for the ills of the country; that just because you are on an island, and out of sight, out of mind, you can be, as Nicholas Shakespeare calls it, 'a dumping ground for a nation's bad conscience about itself' (2004: 28). Tasmanian writer Martin Flanagan (2002: 21), brother of novelist Richard Flanagan, feels the weight of the nation's collective guilt, but feels aggrieved that mainland Australians do not. Rather, he says, they blame Tasmania for what happened:

We were the ones who had done the killing, we had shot out the blacks. They spoke as if they had no responsibility in the matter. At the same time, none of those I met in Melbourne could tell me the name—nor, more importantly, the story—of a single Aboriginal person from the area. Very few Tasmanians can't tell you about Truganini.

It can be cleansing to pour that which is distasteful down the sink, allowing oneself to live with a clear conscience. Tasmanian writer and filmmaker Bernard Lloyd (1998: 195) writes, 'Australians project all the things they despise and loathe about themselves—their racism, their homophobia, their parochialism—onto their "other" Tasmania, the "Albania of the Antipodes"'. They think "we're not like that—Tasmania is"'. The population—called 'Tasmaniacs' by some—was thought to be 'so backward and inbred' that on the mainland, two-headed Tassie jokes were the norm.

Composer Don Kay (2011: n.p.) left for England 'because people of my generation, in all the arts, and beyond the arts, too, have a strong cultural cringe. Everything was better everywhere else not here, and particularly Tasmania. We were funny little people in the eyes of the mainlanders'. He credits a critical mass of artists who have put Tasmania into an international spotlight as helping to change these attitudes: 'People like Richard Flanagan, Pete Hay, some of the visual artists, are national

figures, international figures'. Richard Wastell (2011: n.p.), too, credits some of these same artists for helping him recognise that his life's work should be in Tasmania, despite islanders' negative views of the place:

We always had the sense that we were living in the backwater. I think it was crippling for a long time here—most people thought very small. Everyone was looking overseas for their models. I was a little guilty of that myself. It was only when I met Richard Flanagan and Pete Hay and Matt Newton that I had an epiphany and realised that it was almost the only thing that I could do. Because I saw that I was them.

Seeing himself reflected in his artistic heroes was a turning point for Wastell, and is symbolic of a society's maturing sense of self. Wastell attributes the general change in Tasmania's attitude toward itself to the rise of the Green Party—and to one artist in particular: writer Richard Flanagan. Wastell says:

The Lake Pedder campaign was the first time people said, 'We think this place is special'. [There was] a real change in consciousness here. Many people wouldn't agree, but I think Richard Flanagan has had a massive effect on the psyche of the whole place simply because he was the first artist to walk on the international stage as an artist writing about his own place.

In addition to being among the first novelists to tackle some of Tasmania's darker stories, Flanagan wrote and published essays about some of Tasmania's environmental atrocities, including the flooding of Lake Pedder (1990: 195). A decade later Flanagan was part of a movement protesting against major sponsorship from Forestry Tasmania during the second *Ten Days on the Island Festival* in 2003, creating an uproar from the cultural community that was against clear-felling and other draconian forestry practices (Norman, 2003; Harwood, 2010: 266–301). It resulted in the cancellation of a planned literary festival and several shortlisted authors (including Peter Carey, Joan London, Tim Winton, and Flanagan himself) withdrawing their books from the *Ten Days*' flagship \$40,000 Tasmania Pacific Fiction Prize, creating a schism between *Ten Days* and Tasmania's writing community that lasted for years. As proof of Wastell's opinion that Flanagan had an effect on Tasmania's psyche, Paul Lennon (Premier from 2004 to 2008) said in an

ABC television broadcast: ‘Richard Flanagan and his fiction is [sic] not welcome in the new Tasmania’ (ABC, 2004: n.p.). Despite this personal slur, Flanagan continues to live in and write about Tasmania, earning respect amongst his peers and members of subsequent governments for standing up for what he believes is unjust and detrimental to Tasmania’s future.

After living for thirty years in Tasmania, filmmaker Steve Thomas (2011: n.p.) is perhaps more cynical about Tasmania’s cultural development. He says he has witnessed a shift from cultural cringe to cultural confidence and back again:

For the first twenty years that I was here, I really felt there was a change occurring, towards a place where the arts were valued highly, where it was felt their stories were worth telling, where people could live but make a mark on a bigger canvas, a bigger scale. I don’t think that the promise of the 90s has really been delivered on in the last ten years. We have become a place where the cultural cringe is growing again. We’ve got ourselves to blame for that a little bit.

He notes that the arts have suffered, with no increases in state funding justified on the grounds that the state cannot afford it. He believes that government is not particularly interested in a home-grown film industry, ‘in comparison with a feature film that comes in from outside. Everyone’s running to have dinner with Willem Dafoe, meet the producers, and get their picture in the paper’. Thomas’ example of ‘everything is better from away’ rankles him, particularly since he sees the arts suffering as a result of governmental depiction of a dire financial situation.

Other artists in my study were more optimistic, citing the changes that have occurred as Tasmanians begin to reclaim and celebrate the stories that shaped their island and, in some cases, speaking publicly about their own convict heritage. What was once shameful to admit is now a badge of honour; and as a symbol of that, some would like to see Tasmania’s name revert back to Van Diemen’s Land. Richard Wastell (2011: n.p.) says, ‘Tasmania is not a word that I particularly like—it’s a name born of shame and snobbery. I consider myself a Van Diemonian’. For many, admitting and embracing the past—as Gothic as it might have been—has been a step towards healing ‘cultural cringe’.

Both Newfoundland and Tasmania, then, have witnessed a growth in cultural confidence over the last few decades, due, in part, to a strong sense of islandness that has been fueled by national and international recognition for what makes these islands special as places apart from their mainlands—as well as valuing it at home. As David Keeling (2011: n.p.) says:

When I went to Melbourne, I said, ‘don’t tell anyone I’m from Tasmania’. He [a Melbourne gallery owner] said, ‘why not?’ I said, ‘you know, there’s that inferior thing’. He said, ‘no, no, I’ll tell them you’re from Tasmania’. Then that idea dawned on me that maybe people see Tasmania as someplace exotic. And ever since then, I’ve been proudly saying I’m a Tasmanian painter.

In addition to the perceived value of the exotic as evidenced in Keeling’s observation, Newfoundland has the added bonus of increased financial fortune. But just as important as the influx of new money is new blood. Just how these island societies have adapted to incomers is a measure of their confidence, and the strength of their island identity. The next section looks at the insider-outsider discourse that is a consistent island trope.

8.5 ‘Come from aways’

*From ‘Wayne Johnston talks about the weather’
(for Wayne Johnston)*

*If you come to Newfoundland as a grown-up
It’s like converting to Catholicism as a grown-up.*

On Prince Edward Island, I am a ‘come from away’, or CFA. When I first moved here, people would say, ‘Brinklow. That’s not an Island name. You’re not from around here, are you?’

I remember feeling the sting of being an outsider when my partner and I were not invited to card parties hosted by our landlords across the road. Or during the ice storm of 1984, when we were without electricity for five days, and not one of our acquaintances who still had power and water offered us a place to come take a shower. Even our come-from-away friends.

But it did not take me long to fit in—a childhood spent moving around had ‘trained me up good’: I knew how to listen and I’d learned to be a bit of a chameleon, adapting unconsciously to new surroundings, learning the unspoken rules of engagement in a new school or community. I remember the first time I heard my voice on an answering machine, about a year after I’d arrived on the Island. There was an intake of breath on the word ‘yep’ at the end of sentences that were not there before. Some of my vowels had flattened, and others were just the way things were pronounced here: ‘hoose’ for ‘house’; ‘oot’ for ‘out’; ‘oyce’ for ‘ice’; ‘Ponnal’ for ‘Pownal’; and ‘Stannup’ for ‘Stanhope’.

Part of fitting in on the Island was learning how to ‘place’ people—how so-and-so is connected through blood or marriage or friendship. I have learned how to play the ‘game’, ‘Who’s your father?’, and to carry people’s lineages in my head. I know what a ‘first cousin twice-removed’ is. I have learned to call Ontario ‘Upper Canada’ with just that hint of derision based on nearly a century-and-a-half of being condescended to by the powers-that-be in Ottawa and Toronto, since the ‘experts from away’ always know how to ‘solve our problems’⁵⁸. And I have been part of a generation of Islanders that has come to believe once and for all that everything from away is NOT necessarily better just because it is from away.

Now people find it hard to believe that I was not born here: they assume that because I am such an integral part of the community that I am an Islander. I will never be one of the seven generations, born and bred—the hallmark of being a true Prince Edward Islander. But I am rich in social capital because of my position in the cultural community, as a writer, editor, and book publisher, as a vocal arts advocate, and as part of the Institute of Island Studies that celebrates studying islands on their own terms. And it was being a mother—taking children to daycare, piano lessons, swim practice, early-morning band practices—and being a member of a church

⁵⁸ The Prince Edward Island Comprehensive Development Plan, established in 1969 to create sustainable economic growth based on the Island’s primary industries while achieving ‘fundamental social change’, was one such example. Its primary architect was Des Gallagher, a former advisor to the government in New Brunswick. Writes historian Ed MacDonald (2000: 297), ‘worst of all to its critics, Gallagher, and most of the team of planners that he hastily assembled, were “From Away”’.

choir, that generated the greatest currency. Being ‘adopted’ into a few Island families also helped. I was a new and willing audience for those stories told around the dinner table, which served to reinforce the stories in the retelling. And, after a while, I noticed that I had become part of the stories that were repeated to more recent newcomers. Recognizing ‘home’ when I arrived might have been instantaneous, but after thirty-one years of learning to fit in, I have earned my badge of islandness. As Zita Cobb (2012: n.p.) says, ‘You belong where you give yourself’.

Everyone on an island was a ‘come from away’ at one time or another. As Greg Denning (1980: 31) has written: ‘Every thing on an island has been a traveler. Every species of tree, plant and animal on an island has crossed the beach’. Don McKay (2012: n.p.) echoes Denning—although his reference points date back a few millennia—when he says: ‘Everything in Newfoundland is come from away. I guess there’s a narrow bit on the west coast that was part of proto-North America, but it’s not very big. That whole thing about place changes or becomes more complicated when you plug in deep time’. When you consider time spent on an island as a determinant of who should belong, then, it is slightly ironic, that the insider/outsider discourse should be a constant in determining characteristics of islandness. Although it is often done with a sense of humour, ‘suspicion of outsiders’ (Péron 2004: 330) is an underlying thread of life on an island. Perhaps it is in reaction to being subjected to mainlander attitudes that range from outright colonisation to being the butt of jokes. Perhaps it is a way of protecting an island’s finite amount of land and resources. Perhaps it is an assertion of individuality that comes from being a little more special because one lives on an island. Whatever the reason, islands continue to attract outsiders, which results in either an enriching or negative experience, for both sides.

Despite the irony, innate suspicion of the unfamiliar prevails in many of the island communities I have visited. Even the language reflects it. For instance, if I were a new import to the Isle of Man, I would be a ‘stop-over’; as a tourist, I was a ‘come-over’. In Tasmania I might be a ‘sea-changer’, on New Brunswick’s Grand Manan Island a ‘choosie’ (Marshall, 1999: 100), or on any number of islands I might be a

‘blow-in’. To illustrate just how strongly ‘belonging’ is part of the equation, the traditional inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos Islands are called ‘Belongers’⁵⁹ (Royle, 2007: 42) And if I was born in Newfoundland, moved away and came back, I would be a ‘home-comer.’ On islands such as British Columbia’s Gulf Islands, where the majority of the population is from ‘away’, some CFAs are called ‘true islanders’: ‘Not because they were born or raised here’, writes Philip Vannini (2012: 77), ‘but because they act like they belong ... to be an islander you have to act like one’. In recent years, in an attempt to put a more positive spin on the status, some CFAs on Prince Edward Island have rebranded themselves ‘Islanders by Choice’, or ‘IBCs’.

Yet, it is also part of the island story that incomers are attracted to islands; what Conkling calls the ‘instantaneous recognition’ that many people feel for an island. As Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.) says, ‘Newfoundland just smacked me in the face with its differentness. It grabbed and held, so I felt like I really wanted to move here’. Says Adam Young (2012: n.p.), who first arrived on Fogo Island in 2003: ‘When I first came here I loved it. I was totally hooked in and inspired, and thought that this is the place where I want to set down my roots’. Islands attract people who may be looking for a connection to a place to give their lives deeper purpose and meaning, to experience a belonging that incorporates community and kinship and a common heritage, place, and knowledge, as described by Dodds and Royle (2003: 488) in Chapter 1. Adapting from geographer David Bell (2006)’s conceptualisation of ‘rural idyll’, Vannini (2012: 89) describes this as ‘the island idyll’, one comprising

features such as natural bliss, an aura of authenticity investing social relationships and lifestyles, nostalgia for simpler times, unhurriedness, serenity, safety, a heightened sense of control over one’s livelihood, and a pervasive romanticism infused into social arrangements and a rapport with the landscape. But in addition to the features of the rural idyll, the island idyll acquires typically insular characteristics. Chief among the elements of this ‘lure of the

⁵⁹ I am curious to know what ‘non-Belongers’ are called! I would posit that investigating the language around this topic over a broad range of islands might provide further insights into people’s sense of islandness.

island’ is the clarity of identity that marine routes afford. Because the process of ‘getting there’ is clearly distinct, being an islander acquires clear qualities of uniqueness.

Vannini notes that a rural place setting can have all the characteristics of island living but agrees with Hay’s assertion that islandness must ‘conduce to the sea’ when he says that what makes it the ‘island idyll’ is the encirclement of water: one must make a conscious effort to cross it. Péron (2004: 311) would equate ‘the island idyll’ with the ‘lure of the island’. Through ‘the eyes of the mainlander’, she writes, the island ‘is not quite of this world’; it is a curiosity that must be investigated. Being on a decidedly watery plane, ‘To go on an island is still an act of sensual disorientation’; but because it ‘seems to incarnate an isolated and self-sufficient world that is complete in itself’, the island is somehow ‘reassuring’ (331). Péron continues:

Going to an island means seeking to rediscover and rebuild oneself as an individual; it also means leaving mainland society to discover a community with its constraints and limits but also its warmth and a sense of human anchorage and recognition. An island is always a place where identity is created. Thus, in a world dominated by galloping time and human movement, the need for the island experience has never been more widespread (335).

But deciding to actually set down roots on an island can often involve more than just bringing in the moving van. Conkling (2007: 199) writes that ‘among native islanders, the sense of islandness is deeply imprinted from childhood experiences’, but newcomers can ‘ingest’ islandness by ‘first consciously and then unconsciously incorporating local customs, wisdom, and appreciation for island institutions into their view of the world’. As any ‘CFA’ knows, incorporating those ‘local customs’ can be a minefield. Coming in to an island is often like playing cricket: not only does the shoreline act as a boundary, ‘wicket-keepers’ abound. And islanders who have been there the longest tend to protect their little piece of turf—their patch of land, the fishing grounds that have been passed down through the family, or their place in the community. Islanders can be particularly suspicious—sometimes justifiably so, after generations of feeling they have been misunderstood, maligned, and mistreated by the mainland.

Borrowing from Aoki's (1996) term, 'insider-outsider hyphen', taken from work on qualitative research methodologies, the hyphen acts as a 'third space'—of 'paradox, ambiguity, and ambivalence, as well as conjunction and disjunction' (Corbin and Buckle, 2009: 60), and in our context symbolises the connection or disconnection between islanders and come-from-aways. The phenomenon of insider-outsider, of course, is not restricted to islands. But the characteristics of islandness make it ripe for gate-keeping. Isolation can make people suspicious of outsiders, especially if, as in the case of both Newfoundland and Tasmania, the outsiders have come to tell them what they must do. And sometimes Aoki's insider-outsider hyphen can prove to be uncrossable. Incomers may not be able to find a job because they do not know the 'right' people, or because they are simply, for whatever reason, not accepted into a community. After being constantly reminded that they are 'from away', they often choose to leave.

After living in four other Canadian provinces and in the United States, Dr Noreen Golfman (2008: n.p.) moved to St John's in 1984, where she is currently Dean of Graduate Studies at Memorial University. She touches upon the strength of community and complex layers of stories that have built up over generations:

Not a day has gone by in which I have not thought about my status as an outsider. I am not from here, but I have happily claimed this place as my home, as much as it has claimed me, and insist on my right to do so. It isn't always easy. One is up against this enormous legacy called Newfoundland culture, a limitless term that is intimately connected to at least four centuries of white settlement. By North American standards, that is a long time for various narratives and counter-narratives of history to have developed, and it is critical for one's well-being to have an appreciation of how layered, complex and contentious these narratives are. As it must be for anyone who chooses to live here, by birth or design, such an appreciation is a work in progress.

Golfman recognises the nuances of Newfoundland culture, and has made a conscious and determined effort to negotiate a path through the layers of story in order to belong. Becoming part of the story is not easy for a newcomer, especially when one feels excluded—even if the locals do not intend it. After Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.)

visited Iceland in 2004, she describes a fellow traveller who perceived his hosts in Iceland as ‘racist’:

He said that, sitting around a bonfire, everybody was asked to say their last names. So when they got to him, he said ‘Goldstein’ or whatever, and they said, ‘what kind of name is that?’, knowing full well that it was Jewish. He felt as though the whole exercise was meant to exclude him. But having been in similar situations in Newfoundland, I know it’s not. Well, maybe that *was* meant to exclude him, but in Newfoundland it’s meant to figure out what cove you’re from, who your parents are. Maybe that is exclusory no matter where it happens.

Interpreting the Icelanders’ attitude as a slight against Jewishness might be a valid reaction; in this instance, we will never know their intentions. But it is interesting to note that in Newfoundland this type of ‘placing’ is not meant to exclude; rather it is meant as a way to include. It might be that in order to ‘endure’ on the island you develop a thicker skin; you learn to withstand feeling excluded and not take umbrage that you may be discriminated against. Sometimes it takes a certain security of personality and strength of resolve to actually remain on an island. Says Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.), who grew up in Brantford, Ontario:

I do a lot of work outside of St John’s. The first question is always ‘where are you from?’ Then, ‘who’s your family? Who are you related to?’ And for a long time, that kind of bothered me, because I always felt that people were trying to exclude me. I came to the realization: I think the opposite is true. What people are actually trying to do is find how they are related to you. They’re trying to include you, rather than exclude you, to find that link that places you within their geography of place. So now it doesn’t bother me.

Often ‘a way in’ is what is necessary. It could be marriage to a local, or a job, or having a grandmother on your father’s side who is from the island that gives you credibility, providing a ‘foot in the door’. Says Jarvis: ‘My partner’s mother was from Trinity Bay, and her father was from Conception Bay. So we can find some common ground. People want to know where you fit into their personal geography. And I’m fine with that now’.

That ‘way in’ can go back generations, as in the case of Newfoundland’s Joan Clark (2012: n.p.), who grew up in rural Nova Scotia. She moved to St John’s from Alberta in the mid-1980s. She has what she calls ‘a trick up my sleeve’ when she is asked about being a CFA—which, she adds, happens rarely now:

My sister is a researcher, an historian, very family-oriented. She discovered this Dodge, Steven Dodge, a United Empire Loyalist whose roots went back to Ferryland, to about 1660. People used to say to me, ‘you’re not from here, are you?’ I’d say, ‘no, no I’m not’. But then I’d say, ‘well, where do your forebears come from? I had a forebear here. Ferryland!’

Although it is done with a sense of humour, by dredging up a long-lost ancestor who had settled in one of Newfoundland’s oldest communities, Clark is able to claim a modicum of ancestral lineage. Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.), too, is pleased at the possibility of tracing his Norwegian forebears back to L’Ans-aux-Meadows. He says, tongue firmly planted in cheek: ‘That would be a thousand years’.

But time spent on an island is not a guarantee of acceptance on some islands. The ‘Who is an Islander?’ game played often at social gatherings offers up the potential for satire, as Prince Edward Island storyteller David Weale liked to tell in his 1994 (n.p.) stage show, *A Long Way from the Road*:

Did you hear the one about the death notice in *The Guardian*? It says, ‘Islander dies in Boston’—even though the deceased left PEI as a very young child and never lived here after that. Here’s another: ‘Englishwoman dies in Stanhope’—even though she had come to the Island as a young war bride and lived here for almost fifty years’.

Newfoundland’s Danielle Devereux (2012: n.p.) is the equivalent to the war bride: while her parents were on vacation in Montreal, she was born six weeks early. She says, ‘In terms of Newfoundland identity and who belongs, being born in Montreal can be problematic’. Although Devereux’s family is of good Newfoundland stock, she finds that the accident of her birth in Montreal can be an impediment, however jokingly, when debating just ‘who is an islander?’

And even being a first-generation islander can be a problem, as Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.) explains. Even though she was born in Newfoundland of English immigrants, ironically, her way ‘in’ to a community is through her father. ‘Mr. Moyes’ was a familiar face in outport Newfoundland because of his occupation: selling and servicing boat engines. She says:

I go to the smallest community in Newfoundland, and people will say, ‘where are you from, you’re not from here, your accent’. But there’s always somebody who knows Dad, because there’s always somebody who bought a Volvo Penton Engine. Or to try to help find a storyteller, I’ll say, ‘does anybody know Mr. Moyes?’

Even within an island, this insider/outsider binary exists. Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) sees a divide between North and South Bruny Island, which has a full-time population of 600 and is joined by ‘the Neck’, a narrow sand-dune of land: ‘Psychologically that is a very narrow neck because you’re either a South Bruny Islander or you’re a North Bruny Islander, and there are really two different islands. If it was wider, would we feel psychologically different? I don’t know’. Boulter observes that South Bruny islanders exhibit a more independent spirit than North Bruny Islanders, which she finds is the ‘more civilised end of the island’ and thus ‘think more about unity’, whereas people on the edges of the island want to continue their isolation, ‘protect their marginalised status’. John Cameron (2011: n.p.), too, experiences the insider/outsider divide even within the two halves, what he calls:

the absurdity of human parochialism, to divide and create, if not enemies, at least ‘the other’, out of people in neighbouring villages. Within South Bruny, the people in Alonnah don’t have much time for people in Adventure Bay. On North Bruny, we were told shortly after we arrived here that Barnes Bay was known as the Little Balkans. Because the people on one side of Barnes Bay didn’t even speak to the people on the other side of Barnes Bay. I mean, how absurd.

Cameron’s use of the word ‘other’ to talk about ‘outsiders’ is a primal descriptor; and North Bruny Islanders calling Barnes Bay ‘the Little Balkans’ is an outright slur. These ‘internal divisions’ and ‘factions’ within islands (Péron, 2004: 330) can be the

result of long-standing settlement patterns—or new ones—or differences of opinion. Yet, ‘as soon as there is a threat from outside’, says Péron, ‘internal differences between rival clans tend to be put aside’, forming ‘a united front’. Conkling (2007: 198) calls it a “‘lifeboat ethics’”: where the sense of islanders’ individual fates is intimately and inextricably tied up with those with whom they are cast and with whom they have (almost) no choice to accept, since all succeed or fail together’. As Newfoundland curator Bruce Johnson (2012: n.p.) says:

When you’re on an island where weather can take you out, for four hundred years, and you might hate Catholics and you’re Protestant, everyone’s white and you’re either Irish or French or English, you may be Protestant and you really dislike the Catholic next door, but you gotta get through the winter. So you get through the winter. I think that’s still prevalent.

Similarly, the island of Newfoundland has a very narrow isthmus separating its two parts: the Avalon Peninsula is discrete from the rest of the island. Although the Avalon Peninsula is not home to ‘townies’ exclusively, there is a sharp divide between ‘townies’ and ‘baymen’. Although Newfoundland has a sense of itself as a ‘unique place’, says Don McKay (2012: n.p.), it is really made up of a ‘set of places’:

Culture is not just a monoculture. Placentia Bay has its own culture from people around there: shared accents, a set of stories, names and so on. Townies from St John’s. And then from the west coast there’s this whole set of unique communities, the French settlements of the Port-au-Port Peninsula. And all the bays ...

Each place on the island of Newfoundland has its own characteristics, which, in recent years, even with stronger transportation and communications linkages, still prevail, with strong family and community ties, accents, and stories all playing a role in maintaining their distinctiveness.

Whether they are internal or external divisions, attitudes toward outsiders can manifest in parochialism, nastiness, small-mindedness, and a ‘we-they’ attitude, where ‘people “from away” are defined as “other”, and excluded from decision-making opportunities and leadership positions’ (Marshall, 1999: 108). But many

incomers persist, learning to negotiate the small ‘p’ politics of fitting in. Sometimes they have a champion, like Danielle Wood (2011: n.p), who finds herself helping people negotiate the stories: ‘When I listen to my mom tell stories I’m always having to fill things in for the person listening because she’s skipped over all kinds of relevant information—big gap-filled narratives’. In the retelling of the stories to a new audience, Wood’s mother is reinforcing the stories; and by helping fill in the gaps, Wood is inviting the newcomer into the story, adding another layer and strengthening the story even further as the newcomer becomes part of the weave, too.

And if they are persistent, incomers learn to carve out lives for themselves and become accepted for what they bring to the community, painting and writing themselves into the story of the island. John Steffler (2012: n.p.) says that moving to Newfoundland was a ‘profound, life-changing experience’ because of ‘that sense of social and cultural and familial roots’. With feelings akin to those of immigrants from other countries, Steffler was keenly aware that Newfoundland was not his home. But being welcomed into the community by well-known poet Al Pittman and his family was ‘instrumental in forming my whole understanding of Newfoundland’. The Pittman family had themselves been resettled from Merasheen Island in Placentia Bay, leaving them ‘deeply conscious of this loss of place, and loss of a tradition and way of life. And I saw how scarred and hurt and bereft and really in shock they and the people of Newfoundland were at that point’. Steffler knew that, as a writer, he could not pretend that this was his experience, ‘but I wanted to get as close to it as I could to understand it, sort of sympathetically, or resonate with it’. Steffler’s experience on the resettled Grey Islands was written:

frankly from the standpoint of the newcomer, not pretending to have any deep insight or knowledge of Newfoundland ... that gormless outsider sort of fumbling awkwardly with the place and making mistakes and all the rest of it. Writing *The Grey Islands* was ... an effort to give myself a sort of crash course in Newfoundland, or kind of earn my place there.

Because the Pittman family’s resettlement story had resonated so deeply with Steffler, he was able to layer it onto his own experience on the Grey Islands and create a new story that was part of Newfoundland’s but also uniquely his own.

Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.) notes that ‘personal writing has taken me into twelve bars in St John’s, and they are places I’ve kind of made my own in a way, because I’ve written my way into them’; the writing resulted in a book of poetry appropriately called *12 Bars: a prose blues* (2002); a second volume, *Stormy Weather* (2005), is another experiential journey. As Dragland notes, ‘Writing about my own experience in the place, I feel I can avoid being presumptuous, appropriative. I’m sensitive to the fact of being an outsider within a culture too complex and distinctive to grasp easily’ (in McLennan, 2007: n.p.). He adds that until he came to Newfoundland he never thought of himself as a mainlander; it is something that happens only once you are on an island.

Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) is a native Newfoundlander, but feels he has had to earn his re-entry to the island. As a child growing up in the mining community of Buchans in central Newfoundland, he always felt like a ‘faux Newfoundlander’, because his experience was nothing to do with the coast and the fishery. When he had the opportunity to travel ‘down the Labrador’ with funding support from the Canada Council of the Arts, he was able to immerse himself in the coastal and outport lifestyle, and draw upon the stories he had only heard about as a child, resulting in his book of poetry, *Hard Light*. Later he turned to writing about living in Newfoundland’s mining towns, which became the stories in his book, *Flesh and Blood*. He says, ‘that *is* the world that I knew. But I did have a sense of being an outsider observing this world, and trying to finagle my way in by writing about it’.

Similarly, filmmaker Steve Thomas (2011: n.p.), not a native-born Tasmanian, has found his way ‘in’ through the discovery of convict ancestry. While working on a film project with the university, he discovered that four generations back there were at least three Tasmanian convicts in his family. He says, ‘in a way that legitimizes my being here. I’ve always felt very comfortable in Tasmania, right from the time I came here’. Partly because of that, Thomas calls himself an ‘honorary Tasmanian’.

Adrienne Eberhard (2011: n.p.) notes, though, that the ‘very difficult thing’ of ‘who can write about Tasmania’ has surfaced recently. She wonders if they should be people like Richard Flanagan ‘who have lived here all their lives, and know it profoundly’, or people ‘from “outside”’, such as Nicholas Shakespeare or Julia Anne

Leigh, who wrote *The Hunter*, whose distance and objectivity provide a ‘slightly different way of looking at things because sometimes we are so subjective it helps to have someone else’s perspective’. She does not deny what they have to offer, but also recognises that ‘when you live in a place, you absorb a place. It’s a body thing, as well as a brain thing’.

How is it that one writer or artist can be accepted and another is charged with cultural appropriation? Perhaps if an artist has ‘ingested’ the landscape and way of life, and ‘does a place’ really well—accurately, but with humility and the appropriate amount of gratitude—then locals can be more forgiving of appropriation. Annie Proulx’s *The Shipping News*, set in Newfoundland, is one such example. Meeting with ‘at best, ambivalence’ (Golfman, 2008: n.p.), many locals went much further, calling it ‘grossly inauthentic, misleading and misrepresentative’. But three years after its publication, Proulx was in St John’s where instead of giving a talk called ‘The Outsider’s Eye’, she decided at the last minute to read an essay she had written for *Architectural Digest* called ‘House Leaning into the Wind’, which told the story of her first trip to Newfoundland in the 1990s, in search of a relative. Writes Golfman:

The journey led her not only to a particular cove on the northern peninsula of the island, but also to the family member himself and the beginning of a deep attachment to the place that would result in the writing of *The Shipping News* ... Reading that essay was a brilliant tactical move. Its celebration of place, its implicit acknowledgement of the way the island had worked a form of enchantment on an unsuspecting outsider, disarmed the detractors and softened the subsequent question-and-answer session. Only one audience member dared to raise the spectre of Proulx’s outsider status, which by then was considered a rude question.

Speaking about the island with a passion and humility that resonated with Newfoundlanders—and making a connection with long-lost family—went a long way toward Proulx overcoming the outsider stigma, although, as Golfman notes, ‘taking a position on *The Shipping News* has become one of the convenient ways one measures the quality of one’s identification with Newfoundland. For years, everyone

was asking everyone else what they thought of the book, a test question to both natives and come-from-aways if there ever was one’.

Often the CFAs are more rabid about protecting the island than the islanders are.

They appreciate what could be lost because they have seen that loss elsewhere.

Wayne Johnston (2012: n.p.) has seen many people arrive for a visit and never leave:

They become the fiercest patriots of Newfoundland, the people who wish it was separate, and its greatest defenders and its greatest idealists. It’s a very different thing than having to grow up here as a kid, if you weren’t well-off. It’s a very different thing to come here when you have money and you set up and buy a nice house downtown than [it is] to live in some remote outport and be enisled.

Thus, while Johnston appreciates the passion incomers have for the island, he also recognises that being middle class on an island is much different than being trapped in poverty in an outport community. Indeed, on some islands, incomers have driven up land prices so drastically that locals can neither buy land nor afford to pay the increased property taxes. It is in these instances that islands run the risk of becoming playgrounds for the rich. A counter view in the context of Newfoundland is provided by Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.), who occasionally works with government in attracting newcomers: ‘I like to think we’re still an island, we’re still isolated enough, and value our attributes, our culture and our communal attributes enough to try to maintain them. But you don’t want this to become an artificial thing’.

Stan Dragland says that ‘not everyone thinks that’s good’, that many still think outsiders are taking Newfoundland away from Newfoundlanders. He cites Ron Hynes’ example of asking in concert: ‘Anyone here from out of town?’ People will put up their hands, and Hynes will say, ‘What are you doing here? Taking jobs away from Newfoundlanders?’ Although it comes across as a joke, there is an underlying edge, what Dragland calls ‘a constant thread to one’s existence here’. He says:

I was reading Pam Frampton’s column in *The Telegram* referring to [Newfoundland journalist and fiction writer] Russell Wangersky, who is from away, and is a thorn in the side of the politicians because he asks the hard

questions. Pam was saying he always gets, ‘You’re not even from here’. [My friend] Dave Padden calls it ‘the slur of last resort’. A beautiful expression: ‘the slur of last resort: you’re not even from here’.

Being charged with such a slur can be devastating to some individuals, but Wangersky has persisted and, as former editor and now columnist for the St John’s *Telegram*, he is one of Newfoundland’s most successful journalists, being nominated for Canadian newspaper and magazine awards. Sometimes it takes a person from outside to ‘ask the hard questions’ and to question what many consider to be the norm.

Some islanders have shifted in their attitude between tolerating and not tolerating CFAs. Some appreciate what they bring—what they give the island and what the island gives them. David Keeling (2011: n.p.), a native-born Tasmanian, has seen demographic changes since the 1980s: ‘there are lot newer people, and they’re good people, and they come here for good things. They’ve set up these fantastic businesses, high-quality food and wine, and technology’. But Steve Thomas (2011: n.p.) worries that the trickle of incomers is drying up, to the detriment of the island. He says:

Franklin/Pedder mobilized mainlanders to save stuff ... In the 1970s, 80s, and into the 90s, Tasmania could always hold its head up as the cutting edge for the environment movement, activism, but that has tailed off. There was a time when young people were moving down here. These days you get the odd retiree. There’s no movement of young people down here, or young people back to the place. Which is what I think you need. Young people will always leave, but you want to think they’ll come back.

For The Rooms curator Mireille Egan (2012: n.p.), coming to Newfoundland from New Brunswick, or ‘Canada, as they would call it here’ gave her an ‘instant community. But I’m also still a CFA, certainly. As long as I just don’t try to put on a stupid fake Newfoundland accent, I’m fine. They’ll make fun of each other but don’t you dare make fun of them’.

Even though Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) says that because he wasn't born there he will never be a Newfoundlander, he realises he has been accepted into the community in a slightly ironic twist:

People assume, because I've done so much work in St John's, that I'm a townie. People are shocked—and because I'm so involved with history and I know all this stuff—people just assume that, 'oh, you must have grown up in St John's because you know all our stories'. Well, I'm a storyteller, that's my job.

Like Steffler and Dragland who have written themselves into the story, and like Adam Young who has painted his way into the story, storyteller Jarvis has told himself into the story.

8.6 Tradition and change

Utilizing some of the concepts of island biogeography to help illuminate island cultures can be a useful tool in exploring the nature of islandness. Just as the 'island effect' has an impact on evolutionary processes, so, too, has island isolation contributed to some aspects of culture being maintained on those islands longer than on some mainlands. For example, Old English is the basis for the Newfoundland English and accent that prevails on this island, and is preserved most intensely on the small islands off Newfoundland, as well as in coastal outport communities. Indeed, scholars come to Newfoundland specifically to study Old English.⁶⁰ On Canada's Cape Breton Island, the Scottish fiddling tradition has been described as 'more Scottish than the Scots'. When Scots emigrated to the new world—Nova Scotia (New Scotland), in particular—they brought with them the traditions from their homeland, out of which comes the commonly held belief that the isolation of Cape Breton led to the Scots tradition being better preserved than in the homeland.

⁶⁰ Many believe one of the turning points in Newfoundland's cultural renaissance was the publication of George Story's *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (1982), which captured Newfoundland words and idioms, and traced them back four centuries to English and Irish fishermen and immigrants.

Similar examples can be found in Tasmania. Being so remote from the ‘motherland’ heightened the determination of people of English descent to retain their Englishness. For instance, when settlers arrived in Van Diemen’s Land, they brought with them a desire to recreate the middle-class English garden, a potent reminder of home. These gardens persist to this day amongst many of Tasmania’s residents—despite calls to plant native species over exotics as a more ecologically friendly way of living on the planet; as geographer Jamie Kirkpatrick (2006: 7) writes, his parents and grandparents ‘did not see the domestic garden as a fit setting for native plants’. Tasmanians swelter in their kitchens at Christmastime in order to ensure the traditions of roast turkey and Christmas pudding persist. On the northwest coast of the island, women continue to make traditional English ‘puddins’ to a standard of quality and variety that is no longer found in England; they are ‘the last custodians of the proud culinary tradition of the English pud’ (Hay 2002b: 132). Elements of a coded language brought by convicts, spoken amongst themselves so as not to be understood by the authorities, have also survived.⁶¹

But, as we have seen, these island communities have not been cut off from outside influences. Because Newfoundlanders were so well-travelled, in his role as the province’s Officer of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) sees Newfoundland culture as a blend of different traditions, what he calls a ‘syncretism of English and Irish traditions that has created something new here, on this island’.

In their five centuries of habitation, Newfoundlanders frequently left to work in the lumberwoods of ‘the Boston States’ in the winter, returning to fish in the spring, summer, and fall. Fishermen who fished off the Grand Banks would often put in to Massachusetts, or would take salt fish to Jamaica and bring back Jamaican rum. ‘In certain pockets’, says Jarvis, ‘people were very well-exposed because it was that maritime economy, which was in a sense a very global economy’. He notes that

⁶¹ An example is the word ‘rum’un’ or ‘rumen’, which is a conflation of ‘rum’ and ‘one’. Convicts would call someone a ‘rum one’, attributing to the person traits of slyness, deviousness. The word still exists, but the meaning has changed; today it means ‘funny fellow’, or a teller of tales (McLachlan, 1964).

Newfoundland was the first place to have the telegraph, and electricity came early compared with the rest of North America. Those outside influences that ‘wash up on shore’ (Crummey 2012: n.p.) have had a tremendous impact on the culture of the island. For instance, Crummey talks about *his* traditional Newfoundland music not being the Celtic tradition Newfoundland has become known for, noting that ‘the revival of traditional music feels like fakery, to a certain extent’. Rather, traditional music for his father’s generation was the 1950s American country music of Hank Williams and Patsy Cline: direct imports, primarily via radio and the recording industry, from the United States. He says, ‘country music was *the only music* people would listen to. When I grew up it was Charley Pride and Lynn Anderson and Johnny Paycheck. My parents did grow up listening to traditional music as well. There were square dances and that sort of thing. They made no distinction between those things’.

Crummey thus finds that contemporary Newfoundland music from popular bands like Simini is ‘country music run through the grinder. It’s sort of traditional music, but the feel of it is complete country’. He notes that the Newfoundland in which he grew up was very much a part of the global culture: ‘the kids in high school were completely caught up in the larger cultural movements. It was bell bottoms and long hair and smoking weed and playing rock and roll. They were Newfies to the core at the same time’. He no longer worries about Newfoundland losing its distinctive culture with globalization; rather, ‘it’s changing. And it always has changed. And it’s always been the same’. But, Crummey adds, ‘when it washes up here, it is changed by the place as well’. Like the water meeting the land, ‘it’s like a conversation that’s going on between the larger culture and the one that’s here’. Crummey elsewhere (Sugars, 2010: 23–24) compares Newfoundland’s culture to the Galapagos: ‘Over hundreds of years ... these things mutated and changed, producing new stories ... that at once reflected the originals, but were also new and different. In this way the communities might collectively be considered the human equivalent of the Galapagos Islands’. Island culture, like island biogeography, is always changing and adapting to fit its surroundings and circumstances in order to survive—and thrive. Yet, as John Steffler (2012: n.p.) reports, many returning Newfoundlanders expect it to be the same when they come back—captured like ‘a fly in amber’—and are surprised when it is not. He says: ‘Those of us who have fallen in love with the

place at one particular phase in its history want the place to just stop in time. It's a big mistake. Everything is always changing, everything has always changed'.

In recent years, arts administrator Thea Morash has seen this change manifest in a shift in the preoccupations of Newfoundland's writers. She agrees that there is still a place for 'the handmade quilt blowing on the line, overlooking the ocean', but novels such as Lisa Moore's *February* (2009) and *Caught* (2013), Michael Winter's *The Death of Donna Whalen* (2010), and Jessica Grant's *Come Thou, Tortoise* (2009) are set in contemporary St John's, which Morash finds 'refreshing'. Writer Danielle Devereux (2012: n.p.) says there's 'room for all of it', and 'paying attention to our history for the length of a novel is not a bad thing'. Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.) herself says that setting novels in contemporary times is part of capturing history, too:

There's a kind of desire, an archival lust, really, to capture the past before it goes. When I was writing *Alligator*, and even *Open*, I felt, not a desire to capture the past, but a desire to capture the present and preserve it in some way. So when I was writing *Alligator* I not only wrote the downtown core where I live, but I tried to include the dump, and the Village Mall. I had been to a class discussing *Alligator* just a short while after it was published, and they said, oh, 'Sears in the Village Mall was gone now', and I had written that store. It fascinated me that it goes that quickly, that it changes, that there is no containing or holding it.

A living, breathing culture is not meant to be contained or held; it must adapt and evolve in order to survive. But the fact that what Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.) calls 'big cultural change' is taking place so quickly is not lost on her: 'I half-jokingly blame it on the Alberta money. People going away and coming back. You could always say that people would stop for you on the street. They don't. Everybody's got a story about trying to cross the street and expecting to be able to cross, and they don't'.

Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) attributes the rapid change in Newfoundland culture to the world becoming smaller through technology—particularly exposure to the Internet and more accessible travel. He notes:

People don't want to play the fiddle anymore, they want to learn to play guitar. They don't want to sing unaccompanied ballads, they want to sing pop tunes. That's a reality of living in the century that we live in. But it's always been that way. The rate of change is what worries people now—there's always been influence, but right now the rate of change is so fast. You go to remote Newfoundland communities and you see the guys with the baseball hats turned to one side, and the baggy pants, looking very ghetto and they've never seen a black person in their life. But it's the gangster look and they adopt it. That's part of growing up. You always kind of adapt or adopt to what is new.

Carol Penton (2012: n.p.) experienced the significant changes on Fogo Island after the Fogo Island Process documented by Colin Low of the National Film Board in the 1960s:

They saw that they needed to change because the Catholics were just marrying Catholics. You didn't know the person from Deep Bay or Island Harbour because you never interacted with them. By bringing everybody under the one roof, the communications link, it opened a huge patio for life here.

That 'huge patio for life' resulted in an amalgamation of Fogo Island's eleven communities to become the Town of Fogo Island in 2011, as a way to mitigate the effects of a declining population and the resulting deterioration of services (Thompson, 2011: n.p.). But in the past few years, the changes brought by Zita Cobb and the Shorefast Foundation leave some questioning whether change is a 'good' thing on Fogo Island, whether people are prepared for it. According to Cobb (2012: n.p.), one Fogo Island resident answered, when asked about 'the new Inn': 'We've experienced change before. Change, that's not going to change who we are'. She calls the question 'patronizing': 'This is a friggin' insult. This kind of questioning really assumes that the people of these islands are so fragile and idiotic that the mere building of a twenty-nine-room inn is going to change the course of their history and the integrity of their selves'. How Fogo Island and its residents have experienced and adapted to change in the last century is a model for how other cultures can adapt in ways that ensure they not only survive, but thrive. And for Cobb, being able to do so while maintaining their integrity as islanders is paramount.

Carol Penton (2012: n.p.) provides an example of her islander resilience in a song she wrote and often performs for visitors:

When I sang ‘I loves where I’m from’ to the group that were here last fall, they were so impressed with that song. But there was one girl from Newfoundland who said, ‘You know, I didn’t know what the reaction was going to be when you used the term “I loves where I’m from.”’ And I’m like, why would I have even thought about that? That’s from my heart, my soul. I don’t care what you think about my grammar because that’s my history. That’s who I am.

That story, in a way, is emblematic of Fogo Island being open to change while retaining enough of its character to make it distinctive. That visitors are able to come to Fogo Island to experience the culture that is such a mixture of old and new is part of what makes it such a curiosity. Hundred-year-old fishing stages alongside a new five-star inn that is built on stilts like the stages are; cuisine that is a fusion of international flavours based on local food, available seasonally; garden fences that are built in traditional fashion alongside internet cafes; all of this is part of the syncretism that allows Fogo Island’s culture to not only survive, but thrive, into the twenty-first century.

8.7 Islander coping strategies

So far I have explored the positives of island living—the draw to home, the irresistible allure, the novelty of isolation, or how being islanded feeds creativity. But even in the face of all that is positive about island living, there are perceived disadvantages created by isolation: practical issues such as high transportation costs or limited access to health and education services, or psychological issues such as depression that can lead to addiction and other problems, or feeling marginalised or trapped. Indeed, many people cope by leaving, or they stay with reluctance. Yet, amongst the creative people I interviewed in Newfoundland and Tasmania, a certain attitude of resourcefulness and resilience prevails, often manifesting in a proud defiance. Artists typically lodge within a social cohort that feels positive about where they have chosen to stay or have come to, and who generally will not allow themselves to be trapped. Just how to they do it? What are some of the coping strategies that accompany islandness?

One strategy is to have a sense of humour: life is tough so you have to laugh. Says Newfoundland curator Mireille Egan (2012: n.p.), ‘here you just complain all the time. But you do it with a very good sense of humour. There’s more of a tolerance for the absurd here’. Others speak about the ability to not take yourself too seriously or take offense easily, or, as Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.) says: ‘You’ve already been insulted, there’s nothing left they can do to you. You might as well come out fighting’.

Directness, lack of pretension, comedy of the absurd, laughing in the face of danger and adversity are also part of what inspires Fogo Island artist Adam Young (2012: n.p.). His series of paintings of the fishing stages that were a part of outport Newfoundlanders’ lives for generations symbolise life on the edge:

When I saw the stages, it was almost like they were walking out onto the water. I just went from there, painting the stages as the people. It’s a good comparison to how hardy a Newfoundlander is, and how humorous, and how friendly. The stages are teetering on this really hard rock surface and on these extreme crazy angles, into this really harsh water and weather—and they stand up!

The paintings capture a tenacity to live in such extreme conditions, but Young’s colours and whimsical sensibility demonstrate the humour that is necessary to cope. Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) attributes some of the humour to a democratization that comes with a

sense of boundaries being different. Newfoundlanders often don’t make distinctions. They don’t say, ‘here’s a safe person to make jokes with and here’s a person I’m not sure about’. They’re the same way with their family as they are with everybody else, and vice versa. It might have something to do with growing up where there is no difference between being in your living room or down the road. It’s all one big living room. And if you can’t take it, then that means you don’t belong. It’s almost like a test. If you can laugh at yourself, then you’re fine, you’re good. And if you’re gonna get your nose out of joint because of it, then you’re not worth spending any time with anyway.

Zita Cobb (2013) thinks that, like many outport people, Fogo Islanders

are really good at cheating disappointment by not expecting anything. That will show up in ways where people will say, you say, good morning, lovely day. Someone will say, yeah, but it's going to rain this afternoon. I grew up with that, I understand from where it comes.

But at the same time, Cobb recognises in Fogo Islanders a 'fierce grace that you don't come across every day. People here are fierce, very fierce. You can't put over a Fogo Islander anyday, really. There's a dignity and a grace that goes with that'.

In like vein, Bruce Johnson says that while the close-knit community of Newfoundland has its trying moments—which he likens to 'purgatory ... a place with no time and a place that's full of time'—the good thing is that 'you're only a scandal for a day. There's more gossip to get through tomorrow, so people are much more interested in the narrative than the judging'. That sense of humour is embedded within story—a way to entertain, to draw people together, to relieve tension, to include (or exclude), and to reinforce islandness. Indeed, Zita Cobb says, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, that the ability to tell a good story is a 'condition of employment' in her organisation. And although none of my Tasmanian participants spoke about sense of humour as a defining characteristic, I can speak to my own experience of witnessing a dry, acerbic wit there, which often manifested in 'taking the piss' out of someone; the more they liked one another, the stronger the insults. I found that I could judge how well I was accepted as an outsider when they started 'taking the piss' out of me, too. And if I could give as good as I got, so much the better.

Yet, at the same time, Françoise Enguehard sees tensions coming from the fact that 'people, as we say in French, are on top of each other all of the time'. Some people resolve it by moving to 'the cottage' in the summer: 'We had a summer residence in Langblade, a one-hour boat ride away, and we moved there every summer and would stay there for four months'. By giving each other a break, people might be able to appreciate one another more when they get back together. Thus, in Newfoundland, says Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.), everybody 'has a cabin. And you don't have to have money to have a cabin. It's a cabin where they go to hunt, or to get away from it all, or where they go to fish. Cabin culture is amazing in Newfoundland'. Lisa Moore has a house 'around the Bay' (Conception Bay North), where she and her family

spend their summers, where ‘it’s so beautiful and quiet. Just an intense relationship with beauty. Constantly being amazed by the sky or the trees’. Being there gives her a different sense of time, ‘enough quiet to sort of settle, and start digging deep when I’m writing’.

Similarly, Tasmania has a ‘shack culture’. People go to the shack on weekends or vacations in order to rest and rejuvenate in a natural ‘paradise’ (Thomas: 2002: n.p.). Richard Wastell (2011: n.p.) attributes his interest in art to that ‘shacky kind of lifestyle—fishing from a young age, swimming and surfing—real intimate contact with the land’. Writer Richard Flanagan (Thomas 2002) calls his shack on Bruny Island ‘an escape from what I thought my life was. It brought me more in touch with my family and friends and also my work. My last novel I ended up writing here ... it just suddenly filled up with the life that was all around me here’. Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) is currently working on a new novel called *The Shack*: ‘about coastal Tasmanian culture, particularly when the family shack’s suddenly attains a financial value that may or may not outstrip its sentimental value’.

Based on the fact that shacks are so important to the Tasmanian lifestyle—to the extent that Tasmania has the highest second home ownership in Australia—Steve Thomas, through his Hobart production company, Roar Film, produced a documentary on shacks and shack culture (2002: n.p.). The narrator says:

Shacks are light ... they don’t try and conquer the land, they float over it and don’t try and possess it. They’re really the modern equivalent of the blackfella’s windbreak. They’re about family and friends ... they’re about other ideas about what this world is. Every shack expresses some fundamental spirit of the person who built it. Above all else, shacks are about love, about the land and about the people.

The film is based on interviews with ‘shackies’ from all around the island, both on the coast and in the interior, who proudly show off the shacks they have built, often from salvaged wood and tin, windows and doors. Interiors are filled with furniture and dishes that have been recycled from people’s primary residences. As Hay (in Thomas, 2002: n.p.) says, shacks teach people ‘to be handy, to do things, to be inventive’, calling shacks ‘a vernacular male art form’.

8.8 Concluding thoughts

In the preceding chapter we have explored some of the impacts that an island itself will have on its society. Despite the fact that an island attracts independent-minded people, separateness and isolation can result in strong communities that are interdependent and resilient. How these traits play out in creative ways, particularly in island arts communities, is the subject of Chapter 9.

Chapter 9 Commodifying islandness

‘Making do’
(for Bernice Morgan)

*My father could do anything with hammer and saw,
my mother with needle and thread.
They never threw anything out.
My aunts would take a pair of pants,
turn the good side out
and make a snow jacket for my cousins.
Aunt Sophie made dresses cut on the bias
that made her look like Jean Harlow.
I don’t know how they all knew.
They just had to.*

Preceding chapters have outlined understandings of islandness that attract artists to island living. In this penultimate chapter I turn attention to considering how the island artists I spoke with balance their desire to live on an island with the practicalities of making a living. Some have chosen to live mindfully in an inspiring setting over opportunities for greater recognition and/or material wealth. Others have found ways to use twenty-first-century technology to their advantage, finding that it is possible to work from a remote location and still maintain a successful profile with other island and mainland audiences and markets. Most have taken advantage of informal economies while exhibiting ingenuity that allows them to ‘make do’ with less and keep costs down, and most are multi-skilled, holding one or more other jobs to support their artistic careers. Some have found a way to be part of—or even help create—cultural industries in which island identity is both a cultural product and significant economic driver, including in relation to tourism. I conclude with two examples of this kind of ‘commodification of islandness’: Tasmania’s *Ten Days on the Island*, a cultural festival that celebrates the irrefutable fact of islandness while contributing to the island’s—and its artists’—coffers; and, in Newfoundland, Zita Cobb’s efforts to revitalise the economy and culture of Fogo Island through the work of the Shorefast Foundation.

9.1 *'I don't make money. I make boats'*⁶²

Based on my interviews with artists in Newfoundland and Tasmania, it would appear that islands attract those artists whose value systems match the island lifestyle—which rarely equates with earning a high income. Indeed, as a general rule, people do not choose art as a career path if they want to become wealthy. So how do artists balance the intangible qualities of islandness with the practicalities of making a living?

First, consider the practical reasons for living on an island. For some artists, studio and office spaces in established centres of the art world have become prohibitively expensive, while valuable time is eaten up with commuting. And while getting on (and off) an island undoubtedly adds to one's travel expense, the cost of living can often be lower than on the mainland, with relatively less expensive land and house prices,⁶³ access to informal economies based on sharing and bartering, and back-to-the-basic, almost-off-the-grid values that often include attempts at self-sufficiency such as growing one's own food. For some, support of kinship networks is critical to economic survival, with monetary and in-kind help such as childcare coming from family.

Being multi-skilled is generally, as we have noted, essential to making a living. Artists cobble together incomes from various sources; some have day jobs and pursue artistic passions after the regular workday is over. It is not unusual for artists

⁶² From the award-winning poem 'Foxley River' by Prince Edward Island poet Michael LeClair, about boat-builder Armstong MacGuie. The award was for the very first Milton Acorn Work Poetry Competition in 1988, which subsequently became the Milton Acorn Poetry Competition—part of the Prince Edward Island Literary Awards.

⁶³ This differential in land prices is changing as increasing numbers of wealthy people see the benefits of an island lifestyle, too, and buy prime shorefront real estate at comparatively low prices. In Tasmania, for example, Hobart's house prices have skyrocketed in the last decade, following the national trend. Through gentrification, some islands run the danger of becoming enclaves of the wealthy, with the locals comprehensively displaced (Clark, 2009: 609).

to hold down several different jobs—exhibiting what Baldacchino calls ‘role diffusion’ (2005b: 36). In a government document on the arts and economy in Newfoundland, Higgins (2008: n.p.) reports:

Artists in Newfoundland and Labrador are skilled workers who tend to be more highly educated than the overall labour force, with more than half holding university degrees. In general, they are either self-employed or obtain short-term contracts and therefore do not qualify for employment insurance or have medical and retirement plans. Most full-time artists earned \$4.61 per hour in 1989, far below the provincial average hourly wage of \$11.65. In 2001 artists here were among the lowest paid in Canada, earning an average annual income of \$16,925 as opposed to the national average of \$23,490. As a result of low income, many artists have to accept full- or part-time work in other areas to support themselves and their families, which limits the quality and quantity of their creative output.

In Newfoundland, the two artists I interviewed on Fogo Island fare better than these figures suggest. Adam Young teaches in the island’s school, paints in the evenings and on weekends (juggling parenting responsibilities with his partner), and shows and sells his limited-edition prints and original paintings at local festivals, shops, and occasional local exhibitions. He has an active social media presence (website and Facebook) that enables him to market his work successfully farther afield. Just down the road, Winston and Linda Osmond have built a commercial art gallery from which they sell their paintings, fabric art, and craft items. They have a market garden, chickens and ducks, and sell their produce, eggs, and meat, plus value-added jams and sauces, at the farmers’ market. They, too, promote and sell their art through their website and Facebook. Talking with me in 2012, Winston jokes, ‘if I had to do a business card it’d be like a roll of toilet paper’; his wife Linda adds, ‘you don’t make a living doing one job, you have three or four side jobs’.

Most of the other artists I interviewed in Newfoundland and Tasmania have full-time employment and, like Young, pursue their art when they can. A few can afford to work on art full-time because they have a supportive spouse or have modest investment incomes. Many find work in cultural organisations or create their own

businesses, as did Tasmania's Steve Thomas (2011: n.p.). Thomas' ROAR Film, for instance, is firmly grounded in local stories and talent, producing multimedia productions while seeking funding and distribution outlets beyond Tasmania.

With access to the Internet increasingly available in remote locales, artists find that they can keep in touch with publishers, galleries, and distribution companies on a regular basis while taking advantage of the island lifestyle described in preceding chapters. Indeed, the artists I interviewed find publishing, recording, and performing opportunities on and off their islands; painters exhibit locally, nationally, and internationally. All are grounded in the particular, but take advantage of centre-periphery relationships to fund their projects or promote works to a wider audience.

Islanders' propensity for ingenuity arose in discussions with artists in both Newfoundland and Tasmania. For instance, between Winston Osmond's (2012: n.p.) carpentry skills and Linda's sewing abilities, they can do or make or fix almost anything that needs doing, making, or fixing since a single trip to the nearest hardware store in Gander⁶⁴ costs over \$100 (including fuel and ferry tolls and the better part of a day's time). Says Winston: 'I'll wait or make it. Or do without it'. In ways comparable to the Osmonds, Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.) in Tasmania notes how he and his family members were similarly resourceful: 'We had to create a living for ourselves here, and we've all done it in very different ways. It comes out of a great sense of resourcefulness and creativity, which is the positive side of being an islander'. For Wolfhagen, having been raised on a farm has been of great benefit: 'You never say, oh, I can't do that. If something needs fixing, a plumbing pipe, you don't call a plumber, you just buy a fitting and put it on. You can use that as an analogy to a great many other aspects to our lives here'.

9.2 The business of art and culture

Arts are often marginalised and considered to be 'frills' in western society, relegated to philanthropic and foundational support, and minimal government grants that were

⁶⁴ Gander is the commercial centre on the 'mainland' island of Newfoundland closest to Fogo Island.

regarded by some as handouts. But as artists and cultural workers have come to learn the language of commerce, artistic and cultural industries have become increasingly recognised as significant factors within economies around the world. Books such as Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002: 8), which explores the growing role of creativity in the economy, have redefined how we think about creativity, with the 'core' of the creative class including 'people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new content'. Concepts such as 'the multiplier effect' and culture as a pillar of sustainable development (Inman, 2013; UCLG, 2012; UNESCO; and others) have become an integral part of culture-speak. No longer does 'art for art's sake' suffice; artists must and do make an independent living. At the same time, growth has not been without its challenges, and there remain significant points of resistance to this view. Governments worrying about balancing budgets have to juggle priorities, and often spending on the arts and culture is first to be cut.

In Newfoundland, Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) notes that with the collapse of the cod fishery in 1992 many places in Newfoundland have been challenged with unemployment, resulting in depopulation as people move off-island to find jobs. However:

In some of those places like Fogo Island, you're seeing a real resurgence of interest in culture. And people are seeing culture as a means to greater economic development. They're realizing that what they have, that what has been preserved on those islands, is incredibly special. And that there is potential there for craft production, tourism development, hotel and restaurant businesses.

Culture has the added benefit of being a renewable resource. As Louise Moyes (2012: n.p.) says: 'oil is a finite resource, it's not going to be there forever. But the culture will. So finding ways to support the culture more is necessary'.

Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.) sees the 1970s as the point when Newfoundland's artists began to be able to make a living from their art. Before that, says Doyle, 'we had just as much music [although] we didn't have people making their livings doing it ... So I

don't think there's more culture, it's that there's more expression of it, and it's travelling outside'. Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.) attributes this change to the founding of Memorial University by Joey Smallwood in 1949, and the attendance there of a first generation of students who otherwise would not have been able to go to university. Included were those resettled from the outports and islands, who brought with them their oral traditions and rich outport culture. Dragland refers to one well-known writer, who

would never have gotten a university education but for Confederation. It wasn't cut out for the likes of him ... That's one of the causes of this explosion of writing ... [which] comes out of the oral tradition, which ... is intact for a lot of people. Storytelling, ballad singing—so even [for] those writers who are not writing about that at all, [this is] in some way feeding it.

In her latest novel, *Caught*, Lisa Moore (2013: 139) similarly alludes to the role the University and its Folklore Department have played in bridging old and new cultures. As drug smugglers who had had an adventure and been caught, Moore's characters, Slaney and Hearn, were accorded folk-hero status, aligned with the images of Newfoundland that were emerging from the Folklore Department. Yet, in saying that 'the real folk' had turned them in, Moore illustrates the tension between myth and reality; particularly how myth-making can ignore reality: these men broke the law by smuggling drugs onto the island, yet their characters were deemed heroic by some and their story became part of the mythology:

They'd been arrested when they got back to Newfoundland and the local papers had said Adventure on the High Seas. They were folk, it turned out. The university had just begun to offer courses in folklore and Newfoundlanders were their own subjects, their music and dances, the way they courted and the way they constructed their flakes for drying fish, and Slaney and Hearn were modern-day folk heroes. Meanwhile, the real folk, the simple fishermen of Capelin Cove, had turned them in.

It may be that Newfoundland's isolation has played a part in this cultural richness. Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.) argues this: 'In a space that's geographically and culturally isolated from other larger circles ... people are more responsible for

creating their own fun’. He cites the example of a club hiring musicians: ‘Here, if a bar wants music, then they have to hire locals’, since off-island bands would be too expensive. Danielle Devereux (2012: n.p.), too, sees isolation playing a factor in the kinds of artistic expression people have chosen to pursue in Newfoundland: ‘It is cheaper to write than to do oil paintings, cheaper to hook mats from rags than it is from some sort of silk embroidery. Actual physical poverty plays into it’.

The isolation of Fogo Island has not hindered Adam Young’s (2012: n.p.) ability to market his art. Word of mouth—locally and through social media—has contributed to his success. He says, ‘every now and then I put up a little competition on Facebook that really generates a lot of conversation’. On the other hand, Carol Penton (2012: n.p.) notes that Winston Osmond, whom she has known since they were in seventh grade together, would have benefited from wider recognition if he were living in a larger centre: ‘To see his work today to get up to where it is—he deserved that thirty years ago. He should be living off the fortune that his work has made him. If he was living anywhere else, where the stars are, he would be recognised. That’s been some of the hurdles of being an island’.

Lisa Moore (2012: n.p.) credits the start of her career to a very supportive writing community, beginning with encouragement from a Memorial University creative writing class led by professor and writer Lawrence Mathews, and resulting in the ‘Burning Rock Collective’—a veritable ‘who’s who’ of Newfoundland writers who have gone on to become well-known names in Canadian Literature circles—Michael Winter, Ramona Dearing, Jessica Grant, and others. Moore finds ‘interdisciplinary’ support important: ‘Musicians talk to writers and painters—everybody talks. You have access to intense talent, very profound talents—you can run into Andy Jones on the sidewalk and he will tell you something about making art’. She notes that, per capita, St John’s has more artists than any other place in Canada, a fact cited in a footnote in Chapter 5.

In addition to the University, other factors account for Newfoundland’s burgeoning cultural activity. Mary Dalton (2012: n.p.) attributes the growth in literary talent in recent years to a confluence of factors: a storytelling culture that comes with Newfoundland’s strong connections to Ireland, a local publishing industry beginning

with Breakwater Books, and, in the larger Canadian context, public funding by the Canada Council of the Arts in the 1960s. Dalton notes that ‘there wasn’t much of a Canadian literature being fostered—and developing—until the infrastructure of Canada Council support for publishers’. She says that some attribute Newfoundland’s ‘burgeoning’ of cultural expression to ‘the sureness of your connections, where you are’.

In Tasmania, a comparable cultural renaissance has taken place since the 1980s. Artist David Keeling (2011: n.p.) recognises the practicalities of living in Hobart, both because of the critical mass of artists who revitalised the art scene in the 1980s, and because it was less expensive to live on the island than it had been in Sydney. He highlights the significance of the University’s Tasmanian Art School offering the first master of fine arts course in Australia, which ‘creates its own energy. Pretty soon, a group of them organised to rent the old Blundstone Boot Factory in town’ and created the Chameleon gallery. He notes that living in Sydney and renting studio space was expensive and the commute time-consuming. ‘Your time just got eaten up by getting from A to B, having to work to pay for the rent on the studio’, leaving little time to work. Back in Tasmania, ‘it was two minutes from where we were living to Chameleon, where we had studios. You had all that time just to concentrate on what you were doing’.

Philip Wolfhagen (2011: n.p.), too, sees the advantage of being in his native Tasmania. Of course, he says he is reminded all the time that he is on his island every time he pays his freight bill, which, he realises, is ‘just being a bit glib’. But he took ‘the plunge’ and settled back in Tasmania, and says, ‘it was successful ... with family support and low rental situation. We bought our little cottage for \$62,000. Where else could you do that? That was only in 1994. I’m able to raise a family, and give them a good education, and that’s enough, isn’t it?’

Richard Wastell (2011: n.p.) credits a small, tight-knit community for Tasmania’s success in attracting artists: ‘The artistic community is small enough that there were these really amazing opportunities to come together and do something—not as usual in big cities where people are locked into their own fields’. And although Steve Thomas (2011: n.p.) found creative and business success soon after arriving in

Tasmania in the early 1980s, he feels that in recent years his business has been severely affected by outside influences, saying that ‘the appetite for regional stories has changed’. Because his film and television projects rely on outside funding, it has not been easy in recent years to market his film projects outside Tasmania. He says:

We started off making films that were quite small in their scope, quite Tasmanian-specific films ... looking at things that make this place different ... We were able to tell a number of stories that were really specific to Tasmania ... I would be laughed out of the room by broadcasters if I went and suggested we do something like that now.

He noted that during the 1990s and early 2000s, projects ‘specific to Tasmania’ were supported by the national funders, but policies and priorities have shifted to what he calls ‘the Master Chef phenomenon’ of packaged reality programming. In recent years, ROAR Film has sought projects that go ‘to the heart of Tasmania’s islandness’. Thomas determined that stories about Tasmania’s convict culture are something that ‘Tasmania *can* claim as its own. Until a few years ago, the fact that we were Tasmania allowed us to find some unique stories’. Now, in what he feels to be an unsupportive political climate, Thomas and ROAR Films must work harder than ever to bring those stories to life through the medium of film. What Thomas describes is evidence of the challenges still facing cultural industries; the road to culture as a universally recognised pillar of economic sustainability is by no means linear.

On the other hand, being able to hang his hat on the Tasmanian label is sufficient for musician-composer Carey Lewincamp (2011: n.p.). He is cynical about what he sees as a ‘PR exercise of how can we grab something and encapsulate it, and give it a hook, create a brand’, calling it ‘the wank factor’. However, he says, ‘I need to play that game as well to develop my art’:

So, ‘Could it be anywhere else?’ I could just as easily be writing my music on Prince Edward Island or Iceland, but I’m here and I’m doing it here, so that’s why it’s identifiable. Using the label, I’m an islander, I’m a Tasmanian ... I think my music is for everybody. I use my island Tasmanian‘ism’ simply as a hook, a device, to get out there. My music really is about connecting with

people all over the world. And, yes, I'm happy to stick on that hook of Tasmania.

Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) believes that Tasmania must move beyond the one-industry fix and diversify into a people-based economy, one drawing on the experiences Tasmania has to offer:

I think that it's shifting into an understanding that we're a multiple of small businesses, that we aren't going to choose one big thing like Gunns⁶⁵ to fix all our economic problems. Which is really the way Tasmania has been run up till now. Government supports one big business, they take care of the economy, end of story. We just want one, though, because that would be too confusing if we had to support a whole lot of little artsy type things. Which is really what Tasmania has to offer—little experiences.

In 2013, *Griffith REVIEW*, Australia's quarterly cultural magazine 'of new writing and ideas' devoted a special issue to Tasmania. Entitled *Tasmania—The Tipping Point?* (*Griffith REVIEW* 39), the issue included essays from over two dozen writers and thinkers addressing the future of the island, stating in its website promotional material:

For many Tasmanians a darker reality lies behind the seductive tourism brochures showcasing the state's pristine wilderness, gourmet magazine articles celebrating its burgeoning food culture, and newspaper stories gasping at a world-leading art museum. Tasmania ranks at or near the bottom among Australian states on virtually every indicator of socio-economic performance—including levels of employment, income, investment, education and health. Where does Tasmania's future lie? Has Tasmania reached a 'tipping point', politically, economically and culturally?

⁶⁵ Gunns Limited is Australia's largest integrated hardwood and softwood forest products company with operations in Tasmania. Over the years, Gunns has often been the focal point of environmental protests against their forestry practises.

The themed issue includes essays ranging from Tasmania's Aboriginal story and federal relations to bright lights in the Tasmanian cultural fabric such as the Institute for Marine and Arctic Studies and MONA. Tasmania as 'a special place' figures prominently in the essays, memoirs, and fiction selections. For instance, in his essay entitled 'Tasmanian utopias', Tasmanian writer, director, and film producer, Scott Rankin (2013), addresses the issue of creativity that responds to 'island place', admonishing us to:

Live on an island, away from the status junkies and dud-Diaghilevs. Instead, springboard from the exotica of this island narrative at the arse-end of the world, to be part of international conversations and markets. Use the silence and space to support a unique vision and voice ... Tasmania and its point of difference can provide clear air and intellectual space for avoiding the toxic and predictable, silencing the head and freeing up time ... Space and horizon and rhythm and boundaries are essential to creativity. Being able to raise the eyes and see beyond to the horizon, to watch it settle and change, to enclose but not cut off. The undulating rhythms of changing Tasmanian horizons have a satisfying scale, and a feel that seems to awaken the creative impulse, before a short walk to the pub.

Rankin's words echo those of the artists, writers, and musicians who participated in my study. Their artistic output and cultural industries can no longer be ignored by decision-makers as a contributor to the islands' economies; and artists will continue to make art *in spite of* dissenting views and/or lack of public funding. Both islands continue to develop creative marketing strategies for selling their products on their mainlands, branding their products based on the exoticism of place, their purity, and their icons.

As both islands become more accessible through air travel, tourism has grown in significance. Tasmania's marketing arm, BRAND TASMANIA, looks for Tasmania 'to be recognised as a leader in the world of islands', citing, as crucial to its success, Tasmania's 'difference. Its people are resourceful; applying the kind of creativity that arises from geographical isolation to their business activities, scientific research

and artistic endeavours’ (Brand Tasmania, n.d.: n.p.). On the other side of the globe, Newfoundland and Labrador’s (NL, 2013: n.p.) brand is based on:

natural beauty, humanity, and the strength of our collective character. One that has adapted to this place over generations, survived everything the world has thrown at it, and thrived. It’s a symbol of our creativity, of our way of looking at things differently, of our belief that there really is no place on Earth quite like this place.

On tourism websites from both Tasmania and Newfoundland (Discover Tasmania, 2011; Tourism NLa, n.d.), then, cultural tourism receives equal billing alongside nature, offering a transformational experience that comes from experiencing a distinctive culture: words such as ‘a world apart’, ‘magical’, ‘real and genuine’, and ‘One of the top 10 friendliest cultures in the world’ pepper the sites. The ‘fascination of islands’ (Baum, 1997: 21) stems from factors discussed in earlier chapters—things such as remoteness and isolation, the mystique of the ocean and ‘the crossing’, hospitality, and ‘island time’ which is marketed as a slower pace of life, or ageless, or ‘a place out of time’. Warm-water islands are marketed for their golf and resort tourism offering the five (or six) Ss—sun, sand, sea, sex, and shopping (or salt) (Baldacchino, 2012a; Gossling & Wall, 2007), a paradise that offers opportunities for relaxation and recovery from the rat-race of the modern world. As Baldacchino writes (2010: 36): ‘Why else would a widely distributed, recent full-page credit-card advertisement list “Visit an Uninhabited Island” as one of twenty-one things to do while you’re alive”?’

While cold-water islands offer ice, isolation, and indigenous people⁶⁶ (Gossling & Wall, 2007: 431), islands such as Newfoundland and Tasmania are often seen as exotic places. They are known for their natural beauty and opportunities for unique adventures and niche tourism such as experiential tourism, ecotourism, geotourism, cultural tourism, heritage tourism, culinary tourism (food and wine), cruise ship tourism, dark tourism (such as the convict sites in Tasmania), and VFF (visiting

⁶⁶ It must be noted that indigenous people are not exclusive to cold-water islands.

family and friends who are drawn home for the holidays). Indeed, the Lonely Planet tourist guide lauds Tasmania's 'independent "islander sensibility"' where 'city-slickers will find urban virtues ... delivered with less attitude and more charm than most mainland cities' (Lonely Planet, 2014: n.p.). Island products are branded on the basis of purity of water or air—stemming from an island's perceived remoteness—or on differentiation—the distinctiveness of certain aspects of their culture. Or they can be based on their icons, such as Prince Edward Island's *Anne of Green Gables*, which creates an entire industry with myriad spin-offs.

Marketing 'differentiation'—how your commodity is different from the competition—is at the heart of branding strategies. Newfoundland's Doug House (2012: n.p.) notes that tourism marketing finally recognises what is 'special' about Newfoundland:

I can remember when our attempts at tourism promotion were very weak. We were trying to promote Newfoundland as if it was a place where you could go and be on the beach—it wasn't based on what's exotic about it. Now we've learned that lesson. You see all those new ads—we're promoting what's different. And a lot of Newfoundlanders themselves have come to appreciate and identify with this, saying 'we're special, we're not like the rest of you guys'.

And for some, what is exotic about Newfoundland is that it feels 'real and genuine' (NL, 2014). There is an authenticity that serves to satisfy what Knudsen (2010: 1) calls a 'longing' or 'craving' for 'the immediate, non-commercialized, brute natural world'. This 'longing' is in pronounced reaction to 'a strong technologically mediatized, commercialized and socially constructed reality' that prevails in mainstream society. Experiencing the 'authentic' often allows people to connect on an emotional level—what Davidson et al. (2005) call 'emotional geographies', satisfying a tourist's hunger for 'the real thing', with an 'ability to affect, touch and transform him/her' (Knudsen, 2010: 7). This often allows visitors to feel as if they belong there, too, experiencing 'empathetic insideness' (Relph, 1976: 51), whereby persons consciously engage and commune with a place in order to understand it.

But tourism planners know that it is a challenge to create an island tourism product that satisfies tourists as well as locals. To describe a tourism experience or product as ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ can be dangerous. Too often the label is a result of a top-down tourism marketing strategy that fulfils a certain vision or story created to appeal to visitors; but, according to the people who live there, what is served up may or may not have veracity. If it strays too far, tempers of locals may fray, resulting in reactions ranging from good-natured barbs to satire, cynicism, or downright hostility toward tourists and tourism in general (Lockhart, 1997: 11; MacLeod, 2004: 175). Indeed, as Dean MacCannell (1973: 601) writes, ‘who wants to feel like they are attempting to live someone else’s life?’ Newfoundland’s Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.) similarly observes that ‘we’re becoming a theme park that Andy Jones years ago said we’d become’, Danielle Devereux (2012: n.p.) speaks of the danger of ‘cannibalizing’ Newfoundland’s culture, asking, ‘what happens when you become so self-aware of your culture because you have to sell it?’, and Thea Morash (2012: n.p.) also expresses scepticism about tourism marketing Newfoundland as a ‘place out of time’:

The idea of the rock as static, we definitely do have that and it’s capitalized on as well. Like ‘Lost in the mists of time’, ‘You can come back and visit the province and see people as they lived hundreds of years ago’. Well, tens of years ago maybe.

The intertwining of mythology and reality—folk legends sitting alongside real life—offer much scope for critique. Locals and tourists do not always make comfortable bedfellows. As an example, Marjorie Doyle (2012: n.p.) cites the practice of screeching-in: ‘There are two words I can’t stand, Newfie and screeching-in.’⁶⁷

⁶⁷ ‘Screeching-in’ is a supposed rite of initiation for tourists in Newfoundland, created by a St John’s pub as a marketing gimmick in the 1970s and now widespread across the island. It involves answering the question, ‘Is ye a screecher?’ with, ‘Indeed I is, me ol’ cock, and long may your big jib draw’. You then must take a swig of ‘Newfoundland Screech’—usually a strong Demerara rum—either beforehand as an anaesthetic, or afterward as an antiseptic. And then you kiss a codfish, most often frozen, but sometimes fresh. For this you receive a certificate declaring you to be an honorary Newfoundlander. Some find this ‘fabrication of

Unless you want to call an ambulance’. Calling tourists names behind their backs is an extreme way in which some locals cope with the influx of visitors to their island; in Richard Flanagan’s novel, *Death of a River Guide* (1994), for instance, the uneasy truce between the river guides, Aljaz and his partner (the ‘Cockroach’), and their ‘punters’ is a prevailing theme. At one point in the novel, the group passes a trio of rafters sporting dreadlocks and tattoos ‘who seemed to be drunk or stoned or perhaps both’ (35). Aljaz stops to check over their gear and give them some food (cabbage and sweet potato, to which the woman had a ‘psychological objection ... [since it was] too high in aggressive energy’ [35]). When Aljaz returns, the Cockroach asks, ‘What were Gaia Head and his two cobbers like? ... Any stories?’ ‘No,’ said Aljaz. ‘They had no stories’ (35–6). Having ‘no stories’ about his river, a place that was so imbued with stories, was a travesty to Aljaz.

Doyle’s concerns about authenticity and branding and Flanagan’s dismissive attitude notwithstanding, most artists realise that creating art, books, theatre, music, and films, and exploiting one’s culture and heritage—for themselves as islanders as well as tourists—generally serves to shore up the economy while allowing them to continue to live on their island. Tourism brings in potential purchasers looking for locally produced art and crafts, books and music, that are distinctive from the ‘Made in China’ fare often found in tourist shops. Knowing that a population swells during tourist season allows cultural industries to print more books and CDs, value-added foodstuffs and wines, taking advantage of economies of scale during the manufacturing process. Increased numbers result in an increase in potential audiences for concerts and theatre productions.

Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) agrees that using the word ‘authentic’ as a descriptor ‘is a dangerous concept to try and promote’ as it ‘fossilizes’ the culture and implies judgment: ‘It’s generally something that has been determined by an elite, and I think it eats away at the validity of evolution, cultural evolution’. In his work, Jarvis defines ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage’ as in ‘a constant state of evolution. At the moment that you try to make something authentic, it implies that there’s a finished

outport culture offensive’ creating ‘a debate about cultural authenticity that’s been simmering for years’ (Connelly, 2011: n.p.).

state that tradition should be at. And tradition doesn't work like that. Tradition is always evolving. People are always inventing and reinventing and discarding elements of tradition. So the moment you label something as authentic, it is no longer authentic'. Stan Dragland (2012: n.p.), on the other hand, argues that 'no culture could be anything but authentic. It is what it is. I think people when they say that must be thinking about something more like "unpretentious". That makes a bit more sense than authentic'.

Jarvis sees the value in commodifying artistic practices, such as summer theatre programs, for instance, so that people can live in economically healthy communities:

so they can stay, and do what they like doing. We recognise that people need to live, they need to eat, they need to pay their rent and raise their children. And so to a certain extent we need to commodify things like rug-hooking. It's not enough for people to just knit rugs and put them on the floor and walk on them. People should be able to turn that into art and make money. It shifts the meaning of what they do.

At the same time, Jarvis sees the danger of turning Newfoundland into a tourism village, 'where the happy Newfoundlanders sing and dance and sell rugs all the time'. He recognises that commodification is 'a necessary evil. We need it in order for communities to live because communities can't just rely on government spending to create art'. Jarvis would like to see a more balanced approach to commodification. He describes some of the efforts that have gone towards ensuring that traditions are preserved, giving 'that kind of sense of old Newfoundland, which is what people want to see when they visit', while supporting living, breathing culture. Through the Office of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Jarvis works to 'safeguard' intangible things, such as the technologies and cultures of boat-building:

the materials that go into it, the knowledge that's required, how to make the tools that you need to make the boat. That is an incredibly fragile thing, and once the line of transmission between artisans is broken, it's hard to recreate that body of knowledge. So we're constantly trying to find ways to keep traditional knowledge alive in some way.

The provincial strategy for Intangible Cultural Heritage is based on four pillars: documentation, where ICH staff and others attempt to record traditions and knowledge before they vanish; celebrating those things by honouring tradition-bearers, and providing ways to recognise things that happen; programs around ideas of transmission, finding ways to share knowledge from generation to generation, but also within community; and, finally, cultural industry, which ensures that culture does not become ossified, but rather remains alive. Says Jarvis:

We realise that all these things survive best when we have a living sustainable community. That's sometimes the very difficult part of it, living on an island which historically has been a one-industry, more or less, kind of economy. And as that shifts we see a lot of threats to our intangible cultural heritage.

He cites the example of the provincial wooden boat museum in Winterton, on the Baccalieu Trail northwest of Carbonnear, which strives to keep the tradition of boat-building alive:

And if they are gonna build boats, they have to be able to sell boats. And there is a market, a small market, but there is a market, for people who want a hand-made wooden boat. So that is a commodity. But boat-builders traditionally have always been in the commodities business. They build things and sell them. That's what boat-builders do, for a living. So if we can continue that tradition and help them find and develop new markets, and they might have to modify designs slightly in order to fit a market. If that keeps that tradition alive and viable in some ways, that's a good thing. But you don't want production that is geared exclusively for outsiders. You want production that is kind of healthy, and which has an internal market as well. That's another balance that you need to find.

Memorial University Folklore Professor Gerald Pocius (1996: n.p.) echoes Jarvis in addressing how intangible heritage can create symbols of identity:

When folklore is alive among a people, there is no need to revive or invent it. People are living their culture on a day-to-day basis, and they find no need for collective identity symbols to unify the group around some common image.

And there is usually no felt need to establish academic frameworks, such as Folklore Departments, to actively record and research common activities. When a culture feels threatened, however, as Newfoundland did by the 1970s, there soon becomes a felt-need to enshrine certain cultural items as distinctive, and to invent new cultural forms that reflect what is perceived to be distinctive. These periods when national identity symbols are created are generally times when elite experts—be they artists or academics—take the lead in designating certain forms of behaviour as unique (whether in truth they are or not).

Pocius uses the example of mummering (described in Chapter 6) as ‘a rich source [for folklorists] to pursue the symbolic anthropological and folklore theories of recent interest, while artists may have seen it as a medieval survival worthy of revival ... Both groups took an ordinary activity and *intellectually* turned it into something special’. In recent years the tradition has been revived, or what Mireille Egan (2012: n.p.) calls ‘sanctioned’, with the annual Mummers’ Parade where ‘we get rid of the violence and dress kids up’. Says Bruce Johnson (2012: n.p.): ‘Now it’s a new tourism commodity for us to sell’.

With the recent revitalisation of the Newfoundland economy—through the influx of oil money—a greater cultural confidence has become evident. Government now recognises that tourism is an important economic engine. Says Jarvis (2012: n.p.):

Culture plays a very important role in that. Government did a blueprint in arts and culture in 2006 [Government of NL, 2006], a policy document that’s meant to guide all government agencies. And Intangible Culture Heritage (ICH) at that point was listed as one of the items as part of the strategy. There was a province-wide forum that happened in 2006 or 2007. A lot of things happened at once. There was more money going into the Arts Council and we had a very strong-willed premier who I think saw the value in arts and culture. And I think because he saw the value of it, it was something that was pushed through.

That tourism and culture are inextricably entwined is, then, widely acknowledged. As arts administrator Thea Morash (2012: n.p.) notes:

Almost everybody hangs their hat on culture in Newfoundland and Labrador. It's really meaningful. At the end of the day, tourism is culture and, obviously, arts is culture. Culture is a broad word. Newfoundland and Labrador relies a lot on tourism dollars and hospitality for their economic prosperity, and all of that is based on the culture of the province. There is an economic acknowledgement of how important it is, let alone just the basic cultural importance, in and of itself. We're kind of steeped in it. We may be poor, but we have words, we have our music, we have all these intangibles.

Newfoundland's cultural richness can be attributed to a reaction against being treated so poorly by the rest of Canada:

For a long time, Newfoundland was the poor cousin, it was the Newfie joke. To a certain extent that made us get our backs up a bit. There was a feeling of less than, and not good enough, because there's this weird paradox, of to succeed you had to go away. If you're going to be successful, you have to go to Toronto to be successful (Devereux, 2012: n.p).

She points to the portrayal of Newfoundland as a 'backward culture':

In 1949, when we joined Confederation, it was like being then hauled up by a hundred years. For example, my father grew up without electricity, without indoor plumbing, and he's sixty-five years old; he's not very old. One of the first ways that Newfoundland came on the international media was through the seal hunt, which was negative from our perspective ... particularly as it played out in the 1960s, the whole Brigitte Bardot on the ice thing, and the stewardesses on the ice yelling. The sealers were saying, 'What the hell's happening? Where did you all come from, and what do you know about the seal hunt?' There was no discussion, it was just this kind of swoop down, you're bad. That history is there, and it's kind of a collective history. Even though a lot of us know only bits and pieces of it. It's still there.

But Newfoundlanders reacted. Devereux says:

There was this screw Toronto thing, we're going to succeed here, we're going to pick up for our own culture, because everyone is saying we're the poor

cousin. We were very poor. [T]here was ... a kind of ‘we’re gonna pick up for our own culture’. Something shifted and Newfoundland became the new cool in any kind of national media that was written about Newfoundland.

Noreen Golfman (2008: n.p.), Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor of English and Film Studies at Memorial University, nicely sums up these tensions best when she writes: ‘A healthy ongoing suspicion of Canada, vaguely understood as white Anglo-Saxon culture and embodied in most of the figures who have ever governed in Ottawa, is surely the strongest marker of Newfoundland culture in its current manifestation’. She notes the profound effect that intertwining of place and history has had on Newfoundland culture:

Culture is therefore an effect of both the built and the natural worlds. Failure to understand this interplay of vexed history and harsh beauty can be fatal, especially for the naive outsider. That is why the tendency to romanticize or exoticize the province, whether in art or tourism ads, is often regarded with deep suspicion. You can taste this sort of resistance in a novel like Ed Riche’s *Rare Birds*, which draws comically on the rhetoric of cultural tourism to expose its fallacies and underscore the differences between islanders and outsiders, and between the real and the romantic experience of place. Perhaps more than other Newfoundland writer, Riche captures the ambivalence of place while describing a modern culture of resistance to romanticization.

In Tasmania, comparable tensions between tourism marketing and reality exist. For instance, Danielle Wood’s (2011: n.p.) Tasmania exists somewhere between the present and the past. She points to the way tourism marketing has used nostalgia for Tasmania to create the ‘mainland idea ... that you can come here and step back in time’, with the island’s historical features—particularly convict ruins, ‘places of great suffering, but you see the beautiful sandstone lit up ... in that kind of dusky light, that kind of glow that in so many ways is associated with yesteryear and that kind of Vaseline-on-the-lens kind of effect’. She says:

I think we’re accustomed to seeing ourselves through that lens. For two reasons. One is that there is actually something about the quality of light. We do have longer dawns and dusks. So that quality of light is part of our

experience here. But it's also tied up with a kind of nostalgic light. That's also very English, that dusky light, that particular glow. And because there is a deep strain of conservatism in our culture, we also like that idea that we're a little bit more old-fashioned. I think we subscribe to it, I think we quite like it. Although that's deeply complicated by the fact that there's some really quite radical thinking here, and really some quite creative thinking here. So I think it's a very complex place ... a really very interesting melting pot.

ROAR Film's Steve Thomas (2011: n.p.) cites 'Brand Tasmania' as part of the problem:

Brand Tasmania is spruiking this clean green ... we're clean, we're green, but how can we be clean and green if we're building a fucking great pulp mill in the middle of a wine-growing area ... how can we be clean and green when, perhaps, the jewel in the crown [is] MONA, yet on that boat trip to MONA you have to pass by one of the ugliest industrial complexes that I've ever seen. It's not something we can claim, and if we hang our hat on that, it's always going to fail. I think that's been part of the problem.

Thomas would like to see a focus on branding Tasmania differently, on 'writing and art and even film making'. At the same time, MONA, Richard Flanagan (2013: n.p.) notes, 'has become Tasmania's foremost tourist attraction and a significant driver of its languishing economy'. *Lonely Planet* [2012] listed Hobart as one of the world's top ten cities to visit in 2013, largely because of MONA.

Both Newfoundland and Tasmania have exploited their distinctive cultural and artistic resources in a somewhat mutually reinforcing process that has resulted in a cultural confidence that was not there thirty to forty years ago. The islandness that was once thought of as problematic is now a resource, and artists and tourism marketers are taking advantage. Let us now look at two examples of how using islandness as a resource have become showpieces on Fogo Island, Newfoundland, and throughout Tasmania.

9.3 *Tasmania's Ten Days on the Island*⁶⁸

In the last years of the twentieth century, government leaders were—and not for the first time—looking for ways to address the ‘Tasmanian Problem’ in which the island was identified as an ‘economically dysfunctional, regionally fragmented and demographically declining “basket case”’ (Harwood, 2011: 72). Perceived by both outsiders and insiders as a cultural and economic backwater, mainly because a peripheral island status made it expensive and difficult to create viable enterprises with access to the requisite markets. Tasmania was seen, quite simply, as a problem that needed to be fixed.

Enter, in 1998, newly minted Premier Jim Bacon, who in rather novel fashion considered governance models that looked to culture and cultural industries to reframe Tasmanians’ images of themselves, centring on the irrefutable fact that Tasmania was an island (Harwood, 2011). Bacon (2001: 41) encouraged Tasmanians to capitalize on the ‘island mystique’ by looking to other islands for inspiration and models for development. He cited Wayne Johnston’s memoir *Baltimore’s Mansion* as a way to explain why he believed Tasmania might benefit from the experiences of other islands, rather than always looking to mainland Australia for solutions. This marriage of culture and islands brought forth, in 2001, the biannual festival that celebrates island cultures: *Ten Days on the Island*. Bacon’s ‘Welcome’ in the inaugural festival *Programme* (*Ten Days*, 2001: n.p.) demonstrated his grasp of island living: ‘Island dwellers are different from the masses of continent dwellers. We have skills, characteristics and attributes which set us apart. Islanders have a sense of identity defined by a distinct coastline, not an arbitrary line on a map’. He envisaged a sharing of island cultures from around the world with Tasmanians, and vice versa, that would engender pride in Tasmanians (Harwood, 2011: 166) and help address the problems associated with peripheral economic status.

The first international island cultural festival was purposefully significantly different from most festivals around the world in that it focused on celebrating island cultures.

⁶⁸ Excerpted from my chapter, ‘Poles Apart: Trans-Island Dialogue in Days on the Island’ (forthcoming 2015).

In the festival *Programme* (*Ten Days*, 2001: n.p.), Bacon noted that ‘unique characteristics dominate the culture of islands. The music, songs and dance; the stories, poetry and drama; the paintings, sculpture and crafts emerging from islands are reflections of distinct qualities not found on greater land masses. It is different because we are different. It is special because we are special’. Bacon urged Tasmanians and visitors alike to ‘celebrate what it means to be an island dweller’, and to see their island as the centre of a ‘world of islands’ in ways that mirror larger political assertions amongst Pacific and island scholars, for example (Hau‘ofa, 1993; Baldacchino, 2007a). Indeed, it was observed at the time that, despite ‘the global village and air fares coming down, there is still something different about living and working on an island and the event allows visitors to reflect on this as they follow the festival trails around the state. What they find is a hive of activity in the arts across all media and disciplines way out of proportion to the state population of 300,000 [sic]⁶⁹’ (Britton, 2003: n.p.). The Board of Directors hired an Artistic Director: Robyn Archer, a feminist singer and cabaret performer, and well-known entity on the festival circuit, having directed arts festivals in Canberra and Adelaide, as well as the UK and Europe. Sharing a vision similar to Bacon’s, Archer (2001: 9) wrote: ‘It is the quality of this imagination, this learning and this sense of wonder that I believe will be the greatest legacy of *Ten Days on the Island*—Tasmania unveiling a world of island experiences and thereby enriching the host culture’. By bringing culture from islands of all shapes and sizes, and from all corners of the globe, she and subsequent Artistic Director Elizabeth Walsh hoped to benefit all Tasmanians, and to share Tasmania’s cultural community with the world. At the time, Archer was quoted (Stubbs 2001: 34) as saying: ‘People have really taken notice of this because it is different ... We will inspire Tasmanian artists and they will get the opportunity to do cultural exchanges all over the world. The potential is limitless and it’s a potential that is both cultural and spiritual, as well as economic’.

In the thirteen years since it was established, *Ten Days on the Island* has not been without controversy. At the second festival in 2003, acceptance of a major

⁶⁹ Tasmania’s population, as of March 31, 2003, was 476,199 (Department of Treasury and Finance, 2003: n.p.).

sponsorship offer from Forestry Tasmania created an uproar within sections of the cultural community dedicated to opposing clear-felling and other unsustainable forestry practices. Led by the island's pre-eminent writer, Richard Flanagan, the protest resulted in the cancellation of a planned literary festival and several shortlisted authors (including Peter Carey, Joan London, Tim Winton, and Flanagan himself) withdrawing their books from the *Ten Days*' flagship \$40,000 Tasmania Pacific Fiction Prize, creating a schism between *Ten Days* and Tasmania's writing community that lasted for years. Indeed, after Bacon stepped down in 2004 as a result of ill health, his successor, Paul Lennon, said in an ABC television broadcast: 'Richard Flanagan and his fiction is [sic] not welcome in the new Tasmania' (ABC, 2004).

The 2003 controversy demonstrated that Tasmania is a *contested* island space: arts and culture, the environment, tourism, politics, and the corporate sector all have a stake in a small island society—but often at cross-purposes. The hostility engendered by the Forestry Tasmania debate was part of what many perceived to be the 'Tasmanian problem' in the first place. However, by the sixth festival, held 25th March–3rd April 2011, fences had mended considerably. A 'peace deal' with the forestry industry was in the works, and a major literary festival, *Home Truths: A Feast of Literary Inspiration*, was held in conjunction with *Ten Days*—the first such festival since the one planned for 2003 was cancelled. Grievous hurts were healed when Premier Lara Giddings awarded the Tasmania Book Prize to Flanagan for his book *Wanting* on April 3 at Hobart Town Hall.

Detractors of *Ten Days* would say that the festival has not delivered on the promise to fix the challenges the island community and economy face. General Manager Marcus Barker (2011) counters criticisms of the festival, starting with the one that resources earmarked for *Ten Days* could be better used to support the island's 'home-grown' cultural endeavours. He notes that they miss the point that international engagement is critically important to artistic endeavours and outreach, and is disappointed to think 'that they aren't vaguely brushed by this kind of activity' (2011). There is criticism that the festival is overly hierarchical and too oriented to 'high culture' and does not foster enough collaboration with local artists and community groups, which misses the point that there are other instrumentalities to do

such work, not the least among them the Tasmanian Regional Arts organisation, and fails to account for the number of internationally rated Tasmanian artists who are, in fact, engaged in the festival over time (Barker, 2011: n.p.). Barker notes there is criticism that the festival's many offerings are too spread out geographically and the ticket prices are too expensive for many individuals, which misses the point that the festival is intended to be a whole-of-archipelago-affair and includes numerous free and discounted events. And there is criticism that the acts the Festival brings in are too esoteric for Tasmanian audiences—that, unlike, say, MONA FOMA⁷⁰ and Taste⁷¹ (which offer mostly free events), the festival does not create 'the buzz' that is indicative of success in Tasmania, which fails to account for the purpose of particular kinds of artistic venture, and that 'both festivals have a place' (Barker, 2011: n.p.).

Despite the criticisms, the 2011 festival reported a 51.8 per cent increase in ticket sales over the 2009 festival. It hosted 232 events in 111 venues in 62 locations, attracting 150,000 Tasmanians and visitors (*Ten Days on the Island*, 2011a: n.p.)—reinforcing the idea of the festival as 'an arts and culture road trip' (Clarke, 2006: n.p.). Of the \$3,373,958 received in revenues, 53 per cent of the funding came directly from Cabinet; as the current General Manager of Tourism Tasmania, Marcus Barker (2011: n.p.), noted: 'The notion that *Ten Days* is taking away from arts funding is actually false. They are two separate pools of money. Even if *Ten Days* gets less money, it doesn't necessarily mean that Arts Tasmania would get more'.

At the 2011 festival, collaboration with local artists and community groups included TasDance, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the Tasmanian Writers' Centre, the Makers' Workshop, numerous regional art galleries, museums and libraries; and even restaurants that featured food and wine from Tasmania. The 62 locations across the island hosted mostly single events in every corner of Tasmania; no one was more than an hour's drive from an event. Venues included theatres, streets, pubs, grand

⁷⁰ The Museum of Old and New Art's Festival of Music and Art is a privately run festival held for two weeks in January, with most of the impetus, and funding, coming from philanthropist David Walsh (MONA, 2011: n.p.).

⁷¹ Held for a week over New Year's, The Taste Festival showcases the best of Tasmania's food and beverages, and is produced and presented by Hobart City Council (Taste Festival: n.p.).

houses, historic sites, gardens, town halls, paddocks, mechanics' workshops, and beaches. Artists came from all around the globe, including Canada's Vancouver Island, Cape Breton Island, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, and the island of Montreal; from Scotland, Northern Ireland, Singapore, New Zealand, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Haiti, and mainland Australia, the 'island continent'. Programming included premieres of theatre productions, music concerts, artists' residencies, dance marathons, and art exhibitions. An open air light show in the Royal Botanical Gardens was one of the most popular events, attracting over 13,000 visitors alone (*Ten Days*, 2011a).

According to the final report (*Ten Days*, 2011a), '*Ten Days* generated \$24.37 million added value to the Tasmanian economy, representing a nine-fold return on the \$2.5 million public sector investment'. With the lion's share of audiences hailing from Tasmania, then, *Ten Days on the Island* is an example of a cultural event that put islanders first, with tourism spin-offs coming second. *Ten Days on the Island* has evolved as a festival that is first and foremost for islanders to celebrate their culture and to see it through the lenses of other similar island cultures; whatever benefits accrue from inter-state and international tourism or for the arts and culture sector, both during and between *Ten Days* events, is a bonus. *Ten Days* is a celebration of islandness, by islanders for islanders.

9.4 Arts and culture on Newfoundland's Fogo Island⁷²

Fogo Island, situated off the north coast of Newfoundland in Notre Dame Bay, is fast becoming an international tourism destination, having been listed as second in the Top 10 destinations for 2013 (Sanati, 2013: n.p.) from all over the world. The reason is the Fogo Island Inn, a twenty-nine-room hotel that opened in 2013, overlooking the community of Joe Batt's Arm. Designed by Newfoundland-born and Norway-based architect Todd Saunders, the Inn is being marketed to tourists from across the globe at anywhere from CAN\$550 to \$5,000 a night (cbc.ca), and offers a

⁷² Excerpted from my paper in *Island Studies Journal*: 'Stepping-stones to the edge: Artistic expressions of islandness in an ocean of islands' (2013).

‘geotourism’ experience ‘that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—the environment, heritage, aesthetics, food, culture and well-being of a local people’ (Shorefast, n.d.: n.p.).

Driving the Inn is the Shorefast Foundation, with Zita Cobb at the helm—which Carol Penton (2012: n.p.) jokingly refers to as ‘The Fogo Island Process 2’. Shorefast’s projects include a loans program, modeled after Gramine Bank, which offers funds for business start-ups or expansions, and contemporary art projects through Fogo Island Arts, which, Cobb (2012: n.p.) feels, are a way of offering ‘some resistance to the kind of flattening of the world. Artists have a way of seeing and a way of knowing what we really need as a society’. Among the projects are four art studios built in various locations around the island. Also designed by Saunders, the studios are intended for local, national, and international artists and writers to capitalize on the island’s setting, while offering an opportunity to ‘foster dialogue and exchange with the community’.

One such was Scottish installation artist Rory Middleton who completed a three-month residency in the ‘Long Studio’ in Joe Batt’s Arm. As part of his project, he built a 32’x8’x8’ rectangle wrapped in a fine mesh screen, which he sprayed with water that froze. On a bitterly cold night in February 2012, at Kelly’s Pit, a frozen pond just off the main road between Tilting and Joe Batt’s Arm, he backlit it with a series of images he had taken of the setting sun. The screen became iridescent, creating a video and sound installation called ‘Midnight Sun’. Middleton (in Burns, 2012b: n.p.) says he takes his inspiration from place:

in terms of both the physical attributes of its landscape and the patterns and processes by which people dwell in that place ... You’re really in touch with the island. And because of that you become more aware of the life of the islanders and how things have progressed. How they remain in touch with the past, but are very forward thinking in terms of what they’re doing here.

Middleton found inspiration in the island’s geography and climate, its people and their relationship to their place, turning his art into an interactive piece in which the locals—arriving in snowmobiles—became an integral part of the display, in effect

creating an iterative process of cycling and recycling that is now part of the Fogo Island story.

Reenacting the tradition of haymaking on Fogo Island in 2012 was another instance of artists creating a fusion of old and new, and of locals mixing with visiting artists and newly settled ones (a reverse resettlement, if you will). *Reenacting* is the work of Winston Osmond (2012: n.p.), whose ancestors came to Shoal Bay in the 1700s, and Vida Simon, an artist ‘come-from-away’ from Montreal who moved to Tilting in 2010. By directly experiencing the labour involved with haymaking; by creating a series of paintings in response; and then by leading a workshop in knitting the net bags traditionally used to transport hay on one’s back, the two created new art from old ways. Explains Osmond: ‘Maybe we’re saving something before it’s gone. This will be documented, so the next generation will have it to read about and understand’ (in Burns, 2012b: n.p.). In turn, Simon (in Burns, 2012b: n.p.) observed that:

Since I am a newcomer, mostly from an urban background, I'm curious how our approaches will cross. This project relates to my interests in salvaging handwork that may soon be forgotten, in a sense paying homage to that tradition but then translating/transposing that image to create something new.

The size of Fogo Island, with its intimate connections over space and time, is crucial to a project such as *Reenacting*. Osmond enlisted the help of his eighty-seven-year-old uncle, John Osmond, to teach the workshop participants how to knit the bags, ‘lending authenticity to the act and to the historical relevance of the project’ (Burns, 2012b: n.p.) and serving to deepen and intensify the community connection to place. That the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council was able to support Osmond and Simon’s project under its emerging artists category was a bonus for the artists, and an important recognition from the provincial body that art on the island is worth support.

In another innovative example of utilising the arts to chart the future for a small island community, in the fall of 2011, Fogo Island Arts hosted a three-week-long master class by Canada’s National Arts Centre that focused on the plays of Henrik Ibsen. *The Ark* brought theatre professionals and students to the island, and gave the

islanders an opportunity to interact with members of one of Canada's most cutting-edge theatre groups. The result: a dynamic fusion of global and local, modern and traditional, communicated through the language of theatre. This fusion contributes to the notion of a Canadian archipelagic identity—one that includes its mainland as well as its islands (Vannini et al., 2009: 135). Indeed, CTV's pre-eminent news documentary program, *W5*, featured *The Ark* and Cobb's vision on a television program broadcast across the country (O'Reagan, 2012). As Doug House (2011: n.p.) says, 'the good thing about it in a way, is not just trying to recreate the past. It's trying to be a modern version of this kind of separate place'.

Another example of Shorefast's projects focuses on the island's boat-building heritage, which Cobb (2013: n.p.) refers to as 'intellectual heritage'. Earlier, Cobb (2012: n.p.) has shared the point that her brother 'Tony says we're eight funerals away from never being able to build a boat on Fogo Island ever again. We've got to get the kids involved in this'. Once the primary mode of transportation between and among Newfoundland and its outposts,⁷³ as well as the key to survival in a life that depended on fish, boats were integral to their way of life, and building them was a prized skill. With the decline in the fishery, the rise of new boat-building techniques, and out-migration of younger generations to find work, boat-building in Newfoundland had been a dying art. In an attempt to reverse the trend, in 2007, a year-long program was instituted on Fogo Island in partnership with the local school, where students worked with a master boat-builder. Since then, the Great Fogo Island Punt Race to There and Back, an annual race from Fogo to Change Islands, helps to keep the tradition alive by providing a way for young people on both islands, as well as ex-pats who return in the summer, to use these boats in a competitive race that symbolises, in a friendly way, the ongoing rivalry between Fogo and Change Islands

⁷³ A complementary study would be to compare Newfoundland's boat tradition with how Newfoundland's railway, which was built to solidify the island's inland links in the late nineteenth century, has been lost entirely—replaced by roads and highways. One of the most poignant images of the final crossing (in 1990) of 'the Newfie Bullet', as the train was known, is the following from David Macfarlane (1992: 221): 'The diesel was dragging two long, parallel lines of rusted steel along the railbed. The engine—perhaps the last in all of Newfoundland—was pulling up its own tracks'.

(Fogo Island Regatta: n.d.). In recognition of Fogo and Change Islands' community involvement in preserving and presenting local heritage, in 2010 the Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador presented the Punt Race with the Manning Award for Excellence in the Public Presentation of Historic Places.

Not all are of the view that the emphasis in Fogo Island's cultural revitalisation is at it should be. Thus, although Lisa Moore lauds Cobb's efforts to help Fogo Island's economy thrive, she cannot help but see the value of art for art's sake:

I credit an aesthetic approach to living life, and I think that a wooden punt is a beautiful thing. And I think that there is something more than just the knowledge of how to build a boat that gets lost when you don't know how to do it anymore. We don't know what that thing is, we don't know what that element is, what it brings to people's lives, and that may sound romantic. And maybe building a punt out of fiberglass has some element that—in some ways trying to preserve the past is a futile endeavour. But I wonder if that is what she is trying to do, to preserve the past, or grafting the past onto the present and creating something new.

The impacts of Shorefast's initiatives on the community are unfolding as I write. One such artist/researcher examining the impact on Fogo and Change Islands is photographer Bojan Fürst (2012: n.p.) from St John's. By looking at Fogo and Change Islands through the lens of his native Croatian islands—as well as his camera—Fürst takes inspiration from island surroundings: 'My choice of black-and-white film and traditional wet printing has as much to do with trying to ... connect to that environment as it does with ... slowing me down and forcing a ... contemplative way of working'. He knows there are lessons to be learned and adapted from an archipelago off one continent and transported to another archipelago off another continent, and is 'drawn to small islands as places that can teach us a lot about resilience, adaptability and sustainability'. Fürst uses his photographs to show absence as well as presence: 'A traditional stage on Change Islands is devoid of its accompanying flakes [frame for drying or 'making' fish]; fishing boats are missing from a harbour of a fishing village in Croatia'. The comparisons between Fogo and Change Islands and the Croatian islands are strikingly similar and have inspired Fürst

to be part of an inter-island pollination—an archipelagraphy that is scattered across ‘a world of islands’.

It is noteworthy that long before the Shorefast Foundation was established, the community of Tilting on Fogo Island’s northeastern tip was combining its seafaring heritage, the arts, and tourism to create a dynamic blend of nineteenth-century vernacular with twenty-first-century living. In 1984 the Tilting Expatriates Association (TEA) was formed in St John’s to preserve Tilting’s history and promote community development, publishing a newsletter and journal that exist to this day. A few years later the community established the Tilting Recreation and Cultural Society (TRACS) with the goal to ‘preserve and restore all of the remaining vernacular houses and outbuildings in Tilting, and also to preserve landscape features like fences and gardens’ (Mellin, 2003: 215), using authentic construction techniques and materials and local volunteer labour. Outbuildings include numerous fishing stages, mercantile premises, root cellars, and sheds. TRACS has also renovated the former post office, two nineteenth-century houses to be used as residences and studios for visiting artists, and another similar house for a museum. The organisation’s members have also created a series of walking trails, erected interpretive signage, and ‘are committed to conserving things like locally made wooden boats, furniture, and traditional crafts, such as hooked mats’ (Mellin, 2003: 215). Their volunteer efforts have earned them the laudable designation of Provincial Heritage District and a National Historic Site of Canada (Town of Tilting: n.d.: n.p.). As David Clarke (2012: 176) writes, ‘a number of communities on the Isles have a local museum, but Tilting is practically its own living heritage display’. Again, this recognition of the island’s contribution to the province’s heritage has not gone unnoticed by the central Newfoundland and Labrador—and Canadian—governments.

Fogo Islanders continue to fight for self-determination: in 2011 proponents of amalgamation overcame widespread opposition from residents when the Towns of Fogo, Seldom-Little Seldom, Tilting, and Joe Batt’s Arm-Barr’d Islands-Shoal Bay, and the Fogo Island Region amalgamated as the Town of Fogo Island, accounting for a total population of just over 2,700 (Thompson, 2011: n.p.), a significant number in ‘small island’ terms—the perceived logic being that a united front would make for a

stronger voice within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Amalgamation allowed services to rationalise, a necessary response to population decline in the wake of the cod fishery collapse in 1992 when hundreds of Fogo Islanders joined thousands of Newfoundlanders heading for jobs in Western Canada. Fogo Island's island status was part of the consultant's argument for amalgamation: 'The geography alone of the island and the fact that there is a natural ocean boundary simplifies the rationale to establish a single municipal council for Fogo Island' (Whey, 2009: 58).

9.5 Concluding thoughts

In this final chapter the case has been made that artists have turned islandness to their advantage and have found ways to combine lifestyle choices with making a living. The business of art that takes inspiration from the local—in this case, islands—is becoming increasingly recognised as a significant contributor to the economy as more and more people hunger for culture grounded in the exoticism of the particular—again, from islands. And, in recent years, as Newfoundland and Tasmania and their satellite islands have become more accessible to the travelling public, island artists endeavour to take greater advantage of the tourism industry to make money from their art. All of these elements combine to enable artists to remain—and make art—on and about and through their islands.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

The name Mi'kmaq means 'people of the dawn', the first people to see the sunrise. When they named the Island 'Abegweit' (which means cradled on the waves), there was a legend that came with it. The Great Spirit Glooscap, the creator of all the world, took all of its most beautiful colours, mixed them together, dipped his brush in, and then he painted Abegweit into existence. Glooscap had a special place in his heart for Abegweit, and when he slept at night, he thought of Nova Scotia as his bed and this Island as his pillow. Here he would lay his head to sleep and here he would release his dreams into the world. I like to think that is why we have so many creative people on the Island, so many artists, poets, painters, novelists craftspeople, playwrights, musicians and songwriters ... perhaps we are all simply channeling these dreams ... (Gallant, 2014: n.p.).

Through the words and art of creative people on the islands of Newfoundland and Tasmania we have explored islandness, and the role it plays in attracting and keeping individuals who find islands conducive to creative expression. The fascination with islands, the ocean, the edge, the crossing, the islandness, are all contributors to why artists choose to live and make art on these islands. Yet, even while seeking and maintaining independence from the mainstream, the artists I interviewed find that being part of these communities offers crucial support, financially, creatively, and intellectually. This seeming paradox mirrors the physical, psychological, and social boundedness/connectedness paradigm inherent in islandness.

When I began my quest to get at the heart of why people love islands, I chose Newfoundland and Tasmania for their similarities: the relative size and distance from their mainlands, their populations, their jurisdictional arrangements, the treatment of their First Nations/Aboriginal people, the presence of energetic arts communities and artists who displayed an 'island consciousness' in their work, and the fact that there were 'Newfie jokes' and 'Tassie jokes' in both—a result of years and centuries of subjugation by their mainland overseers.

But I learned that there were differences, too. For instance, Newfoundland was settled by poor fishermen and rich merchants from England, Ireland, and Scotland; Tasmania by convicts and their keepers from the same places. Tasmania is significantly farther removed from economic centres in Europe and North America than is Newfoundland. Partly as a result of this, ‘inherited memory of European forebears’ (Hay, 2002c: A7) is not nearly as strong as it is in Newfoundland; the fact that there is an Office of Intangible Heritage symbolises just how strongly Newfoundlanders value their lineage.

Tasmania’s story is a much newer one, with settlement from the early 1800s compared to the early 1600s. For instance, the Makers’ Workshop in Burnie commemorates ‘The Pulp’, a pulp and paper mill that was the heart of the community for seventy-five years before it closed its doors in 2010. The architectural-award-winning building showcases work by local artists and artisans who continue to make paper, as well as cheese and whisky, and engage in various artistic activities. This contrasts with The Rooms in St. John’s, which is an art gallery, museum, and archives built on the two-hundred-and-fifty-year-old site of Fort Townsend, one of Britain’s largest fortresses in North America.

But, in the final analysis, as we have seen through the stories of the artists, there are far more similarities than differences, in spite of the islands being ‘poles apart’. In both Newfoundland and Tasmania, their status as underdogs (inferiority complex in Newfoundland; cultural cringe in Tasmania) has fuelled a veritable explosion in artistic expression. Both have, in the last few decades, undergone a transformation in the arts, inspired in large part by a determination to assert, in opposition to nationalist tropes propagated by the relevant centralities, a distinctive island place and identity, taking control of their cultural, and in some cases, economic and political futures. Perhaps Carol Penton (2012: n.p) describes this change in cultural confidence most colourfully:

I told you earlier on that it was very lonely growing up on Fogo Island. I wanted to express myself with the way I dressed. The standard was, you didn’t step outside the box, but if you did you became known as a weirdo—cracked—

‘there’s something wrong with her, she’s got red pants with diamond shapes on them, like, who wears that?’ It was lonely! But it’s not lonely anymore. The confidence, Zita’s work, Zita’s love, Zita’s passion for this place, has made the confidence of the people that are like me.

Both islands have smaller satellite islands where the ‘enfolded meanings and activities’ inherent in island life are, as John Cameron (2011: n.p.) says, ‘essentialised’ as opposed to ‘simplified’, with fewer ‘compartments’:

Part of that I can ascribe to islandness. Because what an island does, amongst other things, is provide a certain space across which you move and put you in a different mental space than when you’re on the mainland, making things that much more intense. But I have found that sense of being an islander, combined with the fact that when I get on that ferry and come over here, does provide: a) a sort of an intensity of experience, and b) a sort of a unity of experience. I’m finding that getting ourselves to an island has enabled us—enabled *me*—to live more deeply.

Zita Cobb (2012: n.p), too, speaks about depth: ‘the smaller the island, the more deep the knowledge can be. You can’t know Canada—not in one human lifetime. Your mind can’t really comprehend it properly’.

Artists on both islands display strong identification with their islands; like fingerprints with their unique pattern of whorls and ridges, they can identify just who they are in relation to the rest of the world, or as Stuart Hall (2000: 47) calls it, ‘the ground of action’ on which they can plant their feet. But just as a person’s identity can be established by what a person *is*, identity is also defined in terms of what a person is *not*:

This is the Other that one can only know from the place from which one stands. This is the self as it is inscribed in the gaze of the Other. And this notion which breaks down the boundaries, between outside and inside, between those who belong and those who do not, between those whose histories have been written and those whose histories they have depended on but whose histories cannot be spoken (Hall, 1997: 48).

In order to resist exclusion and marginalisation (as world power structures change), territories (including islands) have undergone what Hall (2000: 52–3) calls ‘an enormous act of what I want to call imaginary political re-identification, re-territorialisation and re-identification ... That is how and where the margins begin to speak. The margins begin to contest, the locals begin to come to representation’.

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, Hall’s ‘margins’ include islands—even though those marginalised are no longer so—they have placed themselves at the centre—because of the strong identity created by their boundedness. As Baldacchino (2010: 101) writes: ‘The finite island geography smoothens the nurturing of a sense of identity that is contiguous with territory’.

Woven through identity is the process of ‘storying’, a pulling together of shared experiences that are stitched into a narrative that is based firmly in place—in the instances of Newfoundland and Tasmania. The bounded island space provides a frame for the story, a setting that emplaces it beyond any shadow of doubt. The island audience brings an intimate knowledge to the listening, allowing for a dialogue between teller and listener that enriches the experience. Yet, the permeable edge of the island allows incomers to hear the story, too, and, given enough time, leave their own mark on it. For Newfoundland’s Joan Clark (2012: n.p), the never-ending stories in Newfoundland shape the land, just as the land shapes the stories: ‘We are shaped by our identification with place, our strong feelings for place, but also by our ways of expressing it through art and music and the written word’. This reciprocal arrangement with place, then, serves to strengthen identity even further.

Before radio, before television, and before the Internet, islanders made their own entertainment—through music, art, and storytelling. And those stories became mythologised in the telling. Newfoundland’s Wayne Johnston (2012: n.p.) differentiates between the storytelling he grew up with and the oral tradition, ‘polished and re-polished ... a recitation on it at public events’. Rather, he says, ‘My father was a teller of tall tales, and his father in the same way. We just told stories and impersonated people at the dinner table’. Those stories, ‘the work of poets and novelists from all parts of the globe and in relation to all manner of landscapes and localities’ are a result of ‘human life as essentially a life of location, of self-identity

as a matter of identity found in place’ (Malpas, 1999: 6). John Cameron (2011: n.p.) uses the word ‘nested’, inasmuch that ‘we have small local narratives that are to do with the local places, and as you sort of expand the nested things out, they all are interpenetrating’.

Most of the artists I interviewed were able to articulate their island identity in their words as well as through their art. Some spoke of their choice to either move to the island, or remain if they were originally from the island. Others drew their identity from an intimacy with the island that has been cultivated through stories passed down, or from feeling a sense of home and belonging that was either instant or more gradual. Those stories that bind people to their island place benefit from the community and kinship networks that enfold people tightly together, and which are often felt much more keenly because of the bounded space. Danielle Wood (2011: n.p.) sees island stories as different from mainland stories in:

the degree of intensity because of the size of the community within which things keep circulating. And in Tasmania ... not very many things happen that too many people are outside of. When the bridge falls down,⁷⁴ everybody knows that the bridge has fallen down. That means something to everybody. Everybody’s going to know somebody who was either on the bridge, or got stuck in traffic. It’s going to touch you personally. I think it’s a function of the size of the community that these stories are so collective, and that’s why we all hang onto them so tightly, because they bind us.

Often, sharing a bounded space with people who feel similarly strongly about the place is enough. Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) feels ‘a connectedness with everybody on the island because you’re a Bruny Islander. It forges some identity for you, and

⁷⁴ In 1975 the Tasman Bridge was struck by the ore carrier, *Lake Illawarra*, while travelling up the Derwent River toward its destination in Risdon. A section of the bridge collapsed upon the ship, sinking it. The disaster killed seven of the ship’s crew along with five motorists who drove off the bridge when the decking disappeared in front of them. The bridge was closed for nearly three years, disrupting daily life for many of Hobart’s citizens.

there's some sort of pride in that. That's who we are, and we've got something special that we all love'.

And in defining oneself against the 'other', Tasmanians set themselves apart from mainland Australia, partly because, as Louise Oxley says, 'There was another country that was just red dirt and kangaroos and Albert Namatjira paintings. That was supposed to be my country but it was something I didn't have any experience of'. Carey Lewincamp says, 'when I go overseas I really, really feel Tasmanian. I really identify with it, that space—it's not Australian. I feel Tasmanian'.

10.1 'Teach ... your children well'

*from 'The Language of Seashells'
(for Pete Hay)*

*Where the absences make you ache
and you're forever reminded of them
as you walk the bush or shore*

*Where the tragedy, you say,
is not that our young people leave,
but that they don't come back* (Brinklow, 2012: 63).

'I knows what you means, Miss ... But most of us wants to think about gettin' out of here first before we starts thinkin' about wantin' to come back'
(Kelly, 1993: 1).

The future of a place depends on the next generation. Both Newfoundland and Tasmania share similar stories of outmigration and loss, but several of the artists I interviewed see the future in their young people either staying or returning, and in the in-migration that has occurred as come-from-aways discover the benefits of island living. They were generally optimistic that even though their children might leave for education, employment, and life experience, some would return.

For Michael Crummey (2012: n.p.), witnessing his children's attachment to Newfoundland contributes to his own love of place. He recounts how he was driving his daughter and friends back from a ski weekend when they had car problems:

In the space of a half an hour, eight or nine cars stopped to see if we needed anything. The kids said to one another: 'You gotta love Newfoundlanders. If we were on the mainland, nobody would have stopped for us'. Now whether or not that's true, that's their perception, that being a Newfoundlander means something different than being a mainlander, and that it means something *good*. But when the girls ... were younger, they both talked about getting out of here as fast as they could ... to get to the big world. And now neither one of them is interested in moving. I think they just fell in love with the place, and are living lives that they love, and they're surrounded by friends they love, and they think of this as a *good* place.

Another who sees the value of leaving and coming back is Doug House (2012: n.p.). He compares himself to his youngest son, who has 'become a Newfoundlander' since moving back to the island, just as House himself did in the 1970s:

He appreciates the opportunity that you have to live in a small city, yet in fifteen minutes he can be in beautiful country. A lot of his friends in their twenties and thirties have moved here from different parts of Canada. They see Newfoundland as hot, or cool—they both mean the same. I think there's a sense here, especially in the next generation, that we're not inferior, we're superior. Life is beautiful, the Newfoundland version.

Here, Dale Jarvis (2012: n.p.) maintains, is a younger generation of people 'who are very proud to be Newfoundlanders, and who try to stay ... you see them producing excellent work, bands ... who can live here and be based here but who travel the world. That's the other thing about globalization, it means that you can go and do things in other places but you can always come back home, too'.

A similar picture emerges in Tasmania. Michaye Boulter (2011: n.p.) credits living on Bruny Island for her children's adventurous spirits. It stems from knowing their boundaries. But, she adds:

I think there is the danger also of living on an island. I see certain families and their kids haven't even been to the lighthouse. They've become very close and tight with what they do and what they see. I don't really see that as a positive. I prefer to think that the children can feel like they can make choices. And knowledge is the only way you can make a choice about something, being able to see both sides. It's all very well for me to say I want to live on an island. Because I've seen a lot, done a lot, and that's my choice now. But I don't want to make that choice for my children. I kind of secretly hope they do, but I'm not going to dictate that.

An obligation to raise children to love and appreciate Tasmania was expressed. Rees Campbell, for example, wishes her children:

to enjoy, absorb and appreciate the rest of the world through the lens of a Tasmanian life. One of the things I think I have done for my children, and hopefully my grandchildren, is show that being on an island doesn't mean you can't think globally. The world is still there to be considered and thought of and related to, but you can still do that through a Tasmanian lens. You don't have to live here to have it in your soul.

10.2 Creeping sameness

It is ... the most terrible events that have the greatest potential to tell a story, and islands make the perfect setting for them. The absurdity of reality is lost on the large land masses, but here on islands, it is writ large. An island offers a stage: everything that happens on it is practically turned into a story, into a chamber piece in the middle of nowhere, into the stuff of literature (Schalansky, 2010: 19–20).

Islander resilience in relation to their island place was a strong theme throughout my interviews, culminating in cultural resilience for both islands. As islands scholar Godfrey Baldacchino (2012c: n.p.) has stated, 'constructing place is not done best by statist or nationalist rhetoric; federal political discourse tends towards the patronizing at best, blind and dismissive at worst. If it is meaning that distinguishes space from place, then it is art and culture as meaning makers and markers that offer us hinges to

understand better the dynamics of identity and development'. Indeed, by looking at the geographies of art that explore place and landscape, experience and emotions, identity and belonging through the lens of phenomenology, we glean a deeper understanding of cultural resistance that can lead to cultural resilience (Hawkins 2011). At times it is only through the critical distance provided by art—in the mirroring ourselves back to ourselves—that we better understand the nuances of our own cultures.

Nevertheless, as fast as these attitudes are changing, residents and institutions on both islands are struggling to maintain distinctiveness in the face of increasing global sameness (Baldacchino, 2006: 9). To John Steffler (2013: n.p.), the Internet has contributed to erasing the boundaries:

It comes back to this question: what happens in a place like Fogo Island, where it becomes an art colony, or offers accommodation for artists' retreat. It's a wonderful thing—I think it's necessary, it's better than just being depopulated or turning into a sort of brutally commercialized tourist resort. But inevitably it ceases to be an island in the sense of an autonomous place. It's a place on the map of the Internet, and perhaps it starts to play at becoming an old version of itself, artificially, and in a sense it has ceased to be an island in the old way.

Yet, in the face of 'creeping sameness', 'islandness is a stable geophysical and cultural variable that is an anchoring comfort in the current turbulent context of shifting boundaries and politico-economic fusion and fission' (Baldacchino & Greenwood, 1998: 10), particularly on islands that define themselves against an 'other'—whether it is a mainland or another island with which it has a relationship, jurisdictionally, economically, linguistically, or culturally. Often it is only in standing up to the 'enemy' that culture can remain distinctive. After all, in a postcolonial world, islands can utilise their 'otherness' in ways that lead to self-determined, culturally aware societies; the more we study them, the more we see that islands prove to be complex dynamic entities that have much to offer the rest of the world. 'As the world "globalises", its political, economic and cultural variety rendered down, its riotous anarchy displaced by a single integrated system, it may be from the geographical outriggers that the imperialist nature of this grey and uniform

world is most clearly discerned’ (Hay, 2007: xx), where the necessary ‘critical distance will be found ... The task of island art, the political task, is to construct from such complexity an islandness ... rich in cultural dynamism’ (Hay, 2002: 82). A manifesto written by delegates attending the Islands of the World V conference in Mauritius in 1998 affirmed: ‘That islanders speak, and others hear, of the unique and positive cultural experiences of island living through literature and other forms of creative expression’ (quoted in Hay, 2002: 79).

In Newfoundland, Stan Dragland (2012: np.) sees the ‘Jack Tales’ popularized in new children’s picture books by writer and actor Andy Jones as a kind of metaphor for Newfoundland resilience:

Jack is the traditional folk tale hero, the third guy. He always has two brothers in Newfoundland tales. Jack is always the least likely to succeed, but always the only one who does succeed. Tales of great resilience and inventiveness. Whether it’s a function of islandness, or marine life, or being kind of pre-technology for a long time, Newfoundlanders have been very good at inventing their own tools, and their own ways of doing things, building things for themselves, and recycling things. Out of necessity. You don’t have anything so you make it for yourself.

10.3 The power of lines

Islanders are used to lines—lines of demarcation, lines of separation, real lines, intangible lines, imaginary lines, lines between races, faiths, creeds, points of origin, wealth, class, poverty, place of birth and place of death, lines not to be crossed. Most of these lines have come to be seen as signs of ignorance, fear, intolerance and stupidity, cast off and cast away by knowledge, understanding, compassion and hope for a better Island and a better life. When it comes to

fairness in the EI⁷⁵ system, the only line that should be considered is the shoreline (Smith, 2014: A6).

An island teaches us that there are limits. The artists on Fogo Island or Bruny Island, Newfoundland or Tasmania, know these limits well, and have much to teach us about living on Earth, since Earth, too, is an island. As Rees Campbell (2011: n.p.) notes: ‘I think it’s the only way humans are going to survive is if we actually get smaller’. Or, to reiterate the words of poet Milton Acorn (2002: 92): ‘Growing up on one’s good training / For living in a country, on a planet’.

Because of those limits, islands have long been regarded as laboratories: small in scale, manageable, and, in some cases, expendable. As DeLoughrey (2012: 171–3) notes in her study of the Marshall Islands which were used as nuclear testing sites:

In the antinuclear activism that followed, the militarized island became configured as a synecdoche for the world. The irradiated atoll, as an ‘anti-island’ or ‘zero-island,’ became a catalyst and signifier for a global consciousness about an increasingly militarized planet ... Since ecosystem ecology is modeled on the concept of a closed system, it is no coincidence that island colonies were chosen for nuclear tests and their radioactive surveys. While often deemed peripheral to modernity, we know that islands have in fact been at the center of the development of modern ecological thought.

Others concur. Islands matter, Christian Depraetere (2008: 33) argues, particularly now: ‘There is a growing realization, and resignation, that islands will be one of the major playgrounds for key twenty-first-century issues, such as biological and cultural diversity’. In this vein, Zita Cobb (2012) sees an important role for her own island to play:

⁷⁵ ‘EI’ is Canada’s Employment Insurance scheme, administered by the federal government. By invoking the Island’s shoreline that provides a sense of the Island’s unity, Smith was arguing against changes which would allow the Island to be divided into economic zones resulting in an inequitable distribution of employment insurance benefits.

I would say that the things I've lived through in the last twenty years are actually kind of frightening to me. I think that as a society, as modernity, we're not on a good path. I think we're living inside of a wicked problem: How do we live with the shrinking resources? When are we going to stop extracting capital and calling it income? I think the answers lie in small places. I think big places need to make some serious changes. But I think the learnings are much easier to come by in small places. And of course the small place I know best is Fogo Island.

And Gillis (2014: 155) argues: 'we will never understand island environments until we stop treating them ... as continents in miniature'. Interrelating and perhaps integrating 'island as laboratory' and 'island as metaphor' with the experience of real lives on real islands is a challenge for scholars (Hay 2006, 2013; Fletcher 2011; Baldacchino 2010): learning about real island life from metaphors, and vice versa, is an important lesson that will benefit the study of islands.

10.4 Islandness

I return now to that imponderable; what Lisa Moore calls 'that Newfoundland thing', and what Conkling labels 'a metaphysical sensation that is so hard to put into words'. That which lures people to islands and holds them fast to its shores. That intangible factor the discourse labels islandness.

In the beginning there was water. Always water.

Washes, cleanses, polishes, erodes. Because you come from the sea, you answer to salt water. The pull of the tides in your blood. The longing to go back in your DNA.

You stand on the mainland. Sometimes you can see the island playing peekaboo in the mist: now you see it, now you don't. But you still know in your head that it's there. And when your eye blinks, and the mist clears, there's always the possibility it'll be gone.

Sometimes it's a place you've never been. But you know you want to cross. When you have enough money. When you have enough time. When your ship comes in. When you're certain.

Drawn irresistibly: isla-mania.

Free the clutter. Time to go inside: the outward journey mirrors the inward journey.

Island sky. Island light. Picture yourself inside a dome, surrounded in clear three-dimensional blue. Or on an island encircled by ice. Shrouded in clean three-dimensional white. Or on island at night: a tiny boat bobbing in a sea of stars.

Salt brine nips. Salt spray coats. The tingle of the tip of your tongue on your arm—those little white flakes that dry between the freckle and the sun-bleached hair. Water laps. Wind howls. Always the wind. How saucy the marram grass, answering. How elegant the spruce trees, bowing.

Close to when the world got made. Time slips. On island time now. Not much between your feet and its bones, laid bare.

The shore your edge. You walk beyond, but the sea's skin won't hold you. Figure out how and it will. It will be your road: can take you anywhere. Even the final crossing.

Sea meets sky, sky meets universe. Circles within circles. You at the centre. A blip in the cosmos. How insignificant. Yet. How huge.

And when it's imprinted on you, and you on it. And when it's in your bones. It's home.

References

(ABC) Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2007) 'A letter from Richard Flanagan', Australian Story.

<<http://www.abc.net.au/austory/content/2007/s2410155.htm>> (accessed 9th June 2011).

(ABS) Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) 1367.0—State and territory statistical indicators, estimated resident population.

<<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by+Subject/1367.0~2011~Main+Features~Estimated+Resident+Population~7.1>> (accessed 24th January 2012).

(ABS) Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) 4920.0 – Arts and culture: state and territory profiles, employment in culture.

<<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4920.0Main+Features100282012>> (accessed 22nd July 2014).

(ASIF) Australia's Small Island Forum (2012) Information about the forum.

<<http://www.asiflrdhoweisland.info/>> (accessed 8th October 2012).

Acorn, M. (2002) *The edge of home: Milton Acorn from the island*. Charlottetown, PE: Island Studies Press.

Aoki, T. (1996) 'Imagaries of "east and west": Slippery curricular signifiers in education.' Paper presented at the International Adult and Continuing Education Conference, 27th–28th May, Seoul, Korea (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 401 406).

Adams, P. (2011b) Ovum d'Aphrodite.

<<http://www.windgrove.com>> (accessed 10th July 2012).

Archer, R. (2001) 'Arts for everyone.' *40° South* 20: 8–9.

Archival Moments (2012) The long and hungry month of March. Selections from the archives, live from St John's, NL.

<http://archivalmoments.ca/2014/03/the-long-and-hungry-month-of-march/> (accessed 18th March 2014).

Arnold, J. (2002) 'Mapping island mindscapes: the literary and cultural uses of a geographical formation.' in John Tallmadge & Henry Harrington (Eds.) *Reading under the sign of nature: new essays in ecocriticism*. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press: 24–35.

Arts Tasmania (2008) Unlikely icon celebrated in sculpture.

<http://www.arts.tas.gov.au/news_archive/unlikely_icon_celebrated_in_sculpture> (accessed 29th April 2014).

Atsma, A. J. (2000–2011) Realm of elysion.

<<http://www.theoi.com/Kosmos/Elysiion.html>> (accessed 10th July 2012).

auf der Heide, J. (Dir.) (2010) *Van Diemen's land*. Film.

Australian Wooden Boat Festival (n.d.) About us.

<australianwoodboatfestival.com.au/about-us> (accessed 31st August 2013).

Bachelard, G. ([1958] 1994) *The poetics of space*. Boston, MA: Beacon.

Bacon, J. (2001) 'Unique characteristics.' *Island*, 87: 39–41.

Baglole, H. (2002) Land use issues on Prince Edward Island. Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island.

<http://www.upei.ca/iis/art_hb_1> (accessed 12th May 2014).

Baglole, H. and D. Weale (1973) *The island and confederation: The end of an era*. Charlottetown, PE: self-published.

Baldacchino, G. (2004) 'The coming of age of island studies.' *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 95 (3): 272–283.

Baldacchino, G. (2005a) 'Editorial: islands—objects of representation.' *Geografiska Annaler* 87 (B) (4): 247–51.

- Baldacchino, G. (2005b) 'The contribution of "social capital" to economic growth: lessons from island jurisdictions.' *The Round Table* 94 (1): 31–46.
- Baldacchino, G. (2006) 'Editorial: Islands, island studies, island studies journal.' *Island Studies Journal* 1 (1): 3–18.
- Baldacchino, G. (2007a) *A world of islands: an island studies reader*. Charlottetown, PE: Institute of Island Studies.
- Baldacchino, G. (2007b) 'Bridges & islands: a strained relationship.' in G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *Bridging islands: the impact of fixed links*. Charlottetown, PE: Acorn Press: 1–13.
- Baldacchino, G. (2008) 'Studying islands: on whose terms? Some epistemological and methodological challenges to the pursuit of island studies.' *Island Studies Journal* 3 (1): 37–56.
- Baldacchino, G. (2009) 'The island as figurae utopia.' in Jean-Yves Vigneau *Utopiae insulae figura*. Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, QC: Action Art Actuel: XI–XIV.
- Baldacchino, G. (2010) *Island Enclaves: offshoring strategies, creative governance, and subnational island jurisdictions*. Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press.
- Baldacchino, G. (2012a) 'The lure of the island: a spatial analysis of power relations.' *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 1: 55–62.
- Baldacchino, G. (2012b) 'Getting wet: a response to Hayward's concept of aquapelagos.' *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* 6 (1): 22–26.
- Baldacchino, G. (2012c) Pers. e-mail corresp., 29th January.
- Baldacchino, G. and R. Greenwood (Eds.) (1998) 'Introduction.' in *Competing strategies of socio-economic development for small islands*. Charlottetown, PE: Institute of Island Studies: 9–28.

- Baldacchino, G., and A. Spears (2007) 'The bridge effect: a tentative score sheet for Prince Edward Island.' in G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *Bridging islands: the impact of fixed links*. Charlottetown, PE: Acorn Press: 47–66.
- Barberet, J. (2005) 'Messages in bottles: a comparative formal approach to castaway narratives.' in Maximillian E. Novak and Carl Fisher (Eds.) *Approaches to teaching Defoe's Robinson Crusoe*. New York: Modern Language Association of America: 111–121.
- Barry, P. (2013) Pers. e-mail corresp., 6th January.
- Barsham, E. (n.d.) Tasmanian gothic.
<<http://www.tasmanian-gothic.com/tasgoth.html>> (accessed 31st July 2014).
- Baum, T. (1997) 'The fascination of islands: a tourist perspective.' in D. G. Lockhart and D. Drakakis-Smith (Eds) *Island tourism: trends and prospects*. London: Pinter: 21–35.
- BBC Scotland (2012) Scotland's history: Iona.
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/history/articles/iona/>> (accessed 3rd July 2012).
- Beck, B. (1996) *Prince Edward Island: an (un)authorized history*. Charlottetown, PE: Acorn Press.
- Beer, G. (1990) 'The island and the aeroplane: the case of Virginia Woolf.' in Homi Bhabha (Ed.) *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge: 265–290.
- Beer, G. (2003) 'Island bounds.' in R. Edmond & V. Smith (Eds.) *Islands in history and representation*. New York: Routledge: 32–42.
- Begley, L. (Ed.) (1993) *Crossing that bridge: a critical look at the PEI fixed link*. Charlottetown, PE: Ragweed Press.
- Bell, D. (2006) 'Variations on the rural idyll.' in P. Cloke, T. Marsden & P. Mooney (Eds.) *The handbook of rural studies*. London: SAGE: 149–159.
- Berry, A. (2007) 'Evolution on islands.' in G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *A world of islands*. Charlottetown, PE: Island Studies Press: 143–174.

- Bochner, A. and C. Ellis (1996) 'Talking over ethnography'. In A. Bochner and C. Ellis (Eds.) *Composing ethnography: alternative forms of qualitative writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press: 13–45.
- Bongie, C. (1998) *Islands and exiles: The creole identities of post/colonial literature*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Bonyhady, T. (2004) 'When a picture packs punch.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10th June.
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/06/09/1086749774796.html>> (accessed 25th August 2014).
- Boulter, M., K. Beaumont, S. Brown & L. Fredheim (2012) *Sea stories*. Exhibition curated by H. Norrie. Hobart, TAS: Carnegie Gallery.
- Boyce, J. (2010) *Van Diemen's land*. Melbourne, AU: Griffin Press.
- Bradley, J. (2010) 'Earth embedded song and human amplifiers: a case study of songline knowing', Keynote address at ASLEC-ANZ's 'Sounding the earth: music, language and acoustic ecology' conference, Launceston, Tasmania, 3rd–5th October 2010.
- Brand Tasmania (n.d.) Tasmania, Australia—a beautiful place to grow.
<<http://www.brandtasmania.com/>> (accessed 14th June 2014).
- Brandon University (2014) Researcher studies disappearing farmland.
<<https://www.brandonu.ca/news/2013/12/10/researcher-studies-disappearing-farmland/>> (accessed 30th March 2014).
- Brinklow, L., F. Ledwell & J. Ledwell (Eds.) (2000) *Message in a bottle: the literature of small islands*. Charlottetown, PE: Institute of Island Studies.
- Brinklow, L. (2007) 'A "subterranean river" to the past: the importance of inheritance in creating an island identity in the fiction of Alistair MacLeod,' Refereed Papers from ISIC 3, Prince Edward Island.
<<http://sicri-network.org/archives/isic3/>>

- Brinklow, L. (2010) 'Songlines and storylines.' *Tasmania-bound* (blog), 25th October.
<<http://www.tasmania-bound.blogspot.ca/2010/10/songlines-and-storylines.html>>
- Brinklow, L. (2012a) *Here for the music*. Charlottetown, PE: Acorn Press.
- Brinklow, L. (2012b) 'The geography of the psyche.' *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* 6 (1):132–146.
<<http://www.shimajournal.org/issues/v6n1/m.%20Brinklow%20Shima%20v6n1%20132-146.pdf>>
- Brinklow, L. (2013) 'Stepping-stones to the edge: artistic expressions of islandness in an ocean of islands.' *Island Studies Journal* 8 (1): 39–54.
<<http://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/islandstudies.ca/files/ISJ-8-1-2013-Brinklow.pdf>>
- Brinklow, L. (2013) 'The ABCs of island living', Opinion. *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, PE, 22nd June: A15.
<<http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/Opinion/Letter-to-editor/2013-06-22/article-3285918/The-ABCs-of-island-living/1>>
- Brinklow, L. (2015) 'The island mystic/que: seeking connection in a postmodern world.' in Stanley Brunn (Ed.) *The changing world religion map*. New York: Springer Publishing.
- Brinklow, L. (forthcoming 2015) 'Poles apart: trans-island dialogue in *ten days on the island*.' in G. Baldacchino, R. Gibson & K. Vodden (Eds.) *Place peripheral: the promise and challenge of place-based development in rural and remote regions*. St John's, NL: ISER Books.
- Brinklow, L. & P. Hay (2010) 'The story in the landscape: place theory and the role of Confederation mythology in the construction of island place meanings on Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.' Paper presented at 'Finding their place: islands in social theory', International Geographers Union (IGU) Commission on Islands 2010 Conference, The Island of Ven, Sweden, 27th–30th August.

- Britton, S. (2003) 'Ten days on the island.' *Artlink* 23 (2).
 <<http://www.artlink.com.au/articles/2417/ten-days-on-the-island/>> (accessed 1st June 2011).
- Brown, C. & H. Horwood (1972) *Death on the ice*. Toronto, ON: Doubleday.
- Bruce, M. (1987) 'Gerald Squires' last supper.' *Atlantic Insight* 9 (6): 24–26.
- Burgoyne, M. (2001) 'Walking through thin places.' *Thin places: travels through Celtic holy ground*.
 <<http://www.thinplaces.net/openingarticle.htm>> (accessed 3rd July 2012).
- Burns, K. (2012) 'A sunny night on Fogo Island.' *The Telegram*, 16th February.
 <<http://www.thetelegram.com/Arts---Life/Entertainment/2012-02-16/article-2896880/A-sunny-night-on-Fogo-Island/1>> (accessed 20th February 2012).
- Burns, K. (2012a) 'Make hay while the sun shines.' *The Pilot*, 23rd February.
 <<http://www.lportepilot.ca/Entertainment/2012-02-23/article-2905793/---%0D%0AMake-hay-while-the-sun-shines%0D%0A/1>> (accessed 8th October 2012).
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2010) *Qualitative inquiry: thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Cadigan, S. T. (2009) *Newfoundland and Labrador: a history*. Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Cameron, J. (2003) *Changing places: re-imagining Australia*. Double Bay, NSW: Longueville Books.
- Cameron, J. (2005) 'Place, Goethe and phenomenology: a theoretic journey.' in Bill Bywater & Craig Holdrege (Eds.) *Janus head*. Amherst, NY: Trivium Publications: 174–198.
- Cameron, J. (2008) 'Second letter from far south.' *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter*.
 <http://www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/Cameron_letter_2.htm> (accessed 19th November 2013).

Campbell, R. (2006) *A thousand pleasures, a million treasures*. Tasmania: self-published.

Campbell, R. (2012) *Brazenly pure: the beauty and truth of Tasmania*. Hobart, TAS: 40° South.

Carson, R. (1951) *The sea around us*. New York: Oxford University Press.

(CBC) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2008) 'Have-not is no more: N.L. off equalization.' 3rd November.

<<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/have-not-is-no-more-n-l-off-equalization-1.698924>> (accessed 16th June 2014).

(CBC) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2012) 'Fogo Island Inn and art gallery aim high with luxury rooms.' 30th December.

<<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2012/12/20/nl-cp-travel-fogo-island-1230.html>> (accessed 7th March 2013).

(CBC) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2013a), 'Vehicle speeds off B.C. ferry and sinks at Gabriola Island.' 20th March.

<<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2013/03/20/bc-gabriola-island-ferry-vehicle-sinks.html?cmp=rss>> (accessed 3rd April 2013).

(CBC) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2013b) 'Car plunges off Cape Breton ferry, at least 1 missing.' 26th March.

<<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/story/2013/03/26/ns-englishtown-ferry-accident.html>> (accessed 3rd April 2013).

(CBC) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2013c) 'New ferries coming for Fogo, Bell Island runs.' 13th November.

<<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/new-ferries-coming-for-fogo-bell-island-runs-1.2425076>> (accessed 5th May 2014).

Charlottetown Seaport (2013) Cruise ship schedule.

<<http://www.historiccharlottetownseaport.com/index.php/cruise/ship-schedule>> (accessed 16th July 2013).

- Charmaz, K. (2002) 'Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory.' in J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (Eds.) *Handbook of interview research context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE: 675–694.
- Clark, E. (2004) 'The ballad dance of the Faeroese: island biocultural geography in an age of globalization.' G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 95 (3): 284–297.
- Clark, E. (2009) 'Island development'. *International encyclopedia of human geography*. 607–610.
- Clark, J. (1990) *Swimming toward the light: short stories*. Toronto, ON: Macmillan.
- Clark, J. (2000) *Latitudes of melt*. Toronto, ON: Knopf Canada.
- Clarke, D. J. (2012) *A history of the isles: Twillingate, New World Island, Fogo and Change Islands, Newfoundland and Labrador*. Twillingate, NL: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Clarke, G. (2006) 'Ten days on the island.' *Travel*, 6th June.
<<http://travel.ninemsn.com.au/domesticbasic/tas/654374/ten-days-on-the-island>>
(accessed 1st June 2011).
- Clarke, M. ([1874] 2009) *For the term of his natural life*. Springvale, VIC: Victoria Publishing.
- Clifford, J. (1986) 'Introduction: Partial truths'. in J. Clifford and G. E. Marcus (Eds.) *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press: 1–26.
- Cobb, Z. (2012b) 'The way forward: Fogo Island Shorefast Foundation: Zita Cobb at TEDxFortTownshend.' 11th March.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dVDpvVwGWw&feature=share?>> (accessed 19th June 2012).
- Cobb, Z. (2013) Interview, CBC Island Morning, Charlottetown, PE, 4th October.

- Cohen, A. P. (Ed.) (1982) *Belonging: identity and social organisation in British rural cultures*. St John's, NL: ISER Books.
- Conkling, P. (2007) 'On islanders and islandness.' *Geographical Review* 97 (2): 191–201.
- Connell, J. (2003) 'Island dreaming: the contemplation of Polynesian paradise.' *Journal of Historical Geography* 29 (4): 554–581.
- Connell, J. (2007) 'Island migration.' in G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *A world of islands: an island studies reader*. Charlottetown, PE: Island Studies Press: 455–481.
- Connelly, M. (2011) 'Why I won't be screeching.' *The Morning News*, 21st December.
<<http://www.themorningnews.org/article/why-i-wont-be-screeching>> (accessed 26th July 2014).
- Conrad, P. (1988) *Down home: revisiting Tasmania*. London: Chatto & Windus Ltd.
- Conrad, P. (2009) *Islands: a trip through time and space*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Corbin Dwyer, S. & J. L. Buckle (2009) 'The space between: on being an insider-outsider in qualitative research.' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8 (1): 54–63.
- Corporate Art Scheme (2012) arts@work.
<http://www.arts.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/68749/Corporate_Art_Handbook_2012_web.pdf> (accessed 29th April 2014).
- Cosgrove, D. (2001) *Apollo's eye: a cartographic genealogy of the earth in the western imagination*. Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Coutts, M. (2013) 'That time Toronto called the military to battle snow: an eternity of mockery'. *Yahoo News*, 8th February.

<<http://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/time-toronto-called-military-battle-snow-eternity-mockery-164016884.html>> (accessed 21st November 2013).

Cresswell, T. (2010) 'Towards a politics of mobility'. *Environment & Planning D*, 28: 17–31.

Crummey, M. (1998) *Hard light*. London, ON: Brick Books.

Crummey, M. (2004) 'Journey into a lost nation.' in M. Crummey & G. Locke, *Newfoundland: Journey into a Lost Nation*. Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart: 8–39.

Crummey, M. (2009) *Galore*. Toronto, ON: Doubleday Canada.

Dalton, M. (1993) *Allowing the light*. St John's, NL: Breakwater Books.

Darwin, C. ([1859] 1979) *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*. London: J. Murray.

Davidson, J. (1989) 'Tasmanian Gothic.' *Meanjin* 2: 307–24.

Davidson, J., L. Bondi & M. Smith (Eds.) (2007) *Emotional geographies*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

Dawe, T. A. Fowler, L. Hendrickson, N. Murray & S. Virgo (1977) 'Introduction to *TickleAce*.' *TickleAce* 1, November.

<http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/compoundobject/collection/cns_period/id/39614> (accessed 19th August 2014).

Day, F. P. (1928 [1989]) *Rockbound*. NY: Doubleday; Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

de la Mare, W. (1930) *Desert islands and Robinson Crusoe*. London: Faber and Faber.

DeLoughrey, E. M. (2001) "'The litany of islands, the rosary of archipelagoes': Caribbean and Pacific archipelagraphy.' *Ariel: Review of International English Literature* 32 (1): 21–51.

- DeLoughrey, E. M. (2007) *Routes and roots*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- DeLoughrey, E. M. (2012) 'The myth of isolates: ecosystem ecologies in the nuclear Pacific.' *Cultural Geographies* 20 (20): 167–184.
- Dening, G. (1980) *Islands and beaches: discourse on a silent land Marquesa 1774–1880*. Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press.
- Department of Treasury and Finance (2003) Tasmania's population 2003: an information paper on recent trends and state government policies. Hobart, TAS: Author.
- <<http://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/domino/DTF/DTF.nsf/a80cd541f3ebbaaca2571ae000874fa/4daf93053aad5141ca256dc10079751d?OpenDocument>> (accessed 20th June 2011).
- Depraetere, C. (1990–91) 'Le phénomène insulaire à l'échelle du globe: tailles, hiérarchies et formes des îles océaniques.' *L'Espace Géographique* 2: 126–134.
- Depraetere, C. (2008) 'The challenge of nissology: a global outlook on the world archipelago, part ii: the global and scientific vocation of nissology.' *Island Studies Journal* 3 (1): 17–36.
- Dinesen, I. ([1934] 2002) *Seven gothic tales*. London: Random House.
- Discover Tasmania (2011) Heritage and culture. Discover Tasmania.
- <http://www.discovertasmania.com/activities_and_attractions/popular_attractions> (accessed 1st June 2011).
- Discover Tasmania (2013) *Go behind the scenery*. Promotional video.
- <http://www.tourismtasmania.com.au/marketing/national/behind_the_scenery_phase_3> (accessed 1st March 2014).
- Discovery (2014) *Cold water cowboys*.
- <<http://www.discovery.ca/Showpage.aspx?sid=57365>> (accessed 28th February).

- Dodds, K., & Royle, S. (2003) 'The historical geography of islands: introduction: rethinking islands.' G. Heffernan & D. Robinson (Eds.) *Journal of Historical Geography* 29 (4). Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd.: 487–98.
- Doran, B. (2005) *Hard rock & water*. A film by Barbara Doran. St. John's, NL: Morag Productions.
- Doyle, M. (2005) *Reels, rock and rosaries: confessions of a Newfoundland musician*. Lawrencetown, NS: Pottersfield Press.
- Doyle, M. (2010) 'The ticket out.' *Queen's Quarterly* 117(2). Kingston, ON: Queen's University: 298–311.
- Dragland, S. (2002) *12 bars: a prose blues*. St John's, NL: Pedlar Press.
- Dragland, S. (2005) *Stormy weather: foursomes*. St John's, NL: Pedlar Press.
- Dragland, S. (2009) 'Afterword.' in T. Dawe and G. Squires (Eds.) *Where genesis begins*. St. John's: Breakwater Books: 91–135.
- Driver, M. (1999) The legends of King Arthur.
<<http://csis.pace.edu/grendel/projs993a/arthurian>> (accessed 3rd July 2012).
- Dunford, B. (2009) 'Iona: sacred isle of the west.'
<<http://www.sacredconnections.co.uk/holyland/iona.htm>> (accessed 3rd July 2012).
- Durrell, L. (1953) *Reflections on a marine Venus: a companion to the landscape of Rhodes*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Eberhard, A. (2003) *Agamemnon's poppies*. North Fitzroy, VIC: Black Pepper.
- Eberhard, A. (2004) *Jane, Lady Franklin*. North Fitzroy, VIC: Black Pepper.
- Edmond, R., & Smith, V. (Eds.) (2003) 'Editors' introduction.' in *Islands in history and representation*. New York: Routledge: 1–18.
- Enguehard, F. (2012) *The islands of Dr Thomas*. St John's, NL: Breakwater Books.

- Entrikin, J. N. (1991) *The betweenness of place: towards a geography of modernity*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Farquharson, D. (2000) Mummers' troupe. Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage. <<http://www.heritage.nf.ca/arts/mummersprof.html>> (accessed 31st August 2014).
- Felt, L. F., and Locke, L. W. (1995) "'It were well to live mainly off fish": The collapse of Newfoundland's fishery and beyond.' in R. Arnason & L. Felt (Eds.) *The north Atlantic fisheries: successes, failures and challenges*. Charlottetown, PE: Institute of Island Studies: 197–236.
- Fischer, S. R. (2012) *Islands: from Atlantis to Zanzibar*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Flaherty, M. (2012a) Pers. e-mail corresp., 12th February.
- Flaherty, M. (2012b) Artist's talk, 2nd August. Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, PE.
- Flanagan, M. (2002) *In sunshine or in shadow*. Sydney, AU: Pan Macmillan.
- Flanagan, R. (1990) 'Return the people's Pedder.' In C. Pybus & R. Flanagan (Eds.) *The Rest of the World is Watching*. Sydney, AU: Pan Macmillan.
- Flanagan, R. (1994) *Death of a river guide*. Ringwood, VIC: Penguin Australia.
- Flanagan, R. (2001) *Gould's book of fish: a novel in twelve fish*. Sydney, NSW: Pan Macmillan.
- Flanagan, R. (2006) 'Love walks naked.' in R. Wastell, *We are making a new world*. Hobart, TAS: Bett Gallery.
- Flanagan, R. (2008) *Wanting*. North Sydney, NSW: Random House Australia Pty Ltd.
- Flanagan, R. (2013) 'Tasmanian Devil.' *The New Yorker*, 21st January. <<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/21/tasmanian-devil>> (accessed 19th August 2014).

- Fletcher, L. (2011) “‘... some distance to go’: a critical survey of island studies.’ *New Literatures Review* 47/48: 17–34.
- Florida, R. (2002) *The rise of the creative class*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fogo Island Regatta (2012) The great Fogo Island punt race to there and back. Summer 2013.
<http://www.fogoislandregatta.com/c_concept.html> (accessed 8th October 2012).
- Frère, T. (2008) *Art at the edge: Fogo and Change Islands through the eyes of Thérèse Frère*, St John’s, NL: DCL Publishing.
- Fürst, B. (2012) Pers. e-mail corresp., 24th February.
- Gablik, S. (1991) *The reenchancement of art*. New York: Thames and Hudson.
- Gallant, L. (2014) ‘Searching for Abegweit.’ Charlottetown Festival production, Summer 2014, Charlottetown, PE.
- Geoscience Australia (2013) Home—Education—Geoscience—Basics—Landforms—Islands.
<<http://www.ga.gov.au/education/geoscience-basics/landforms/islands.html>> (accessed 6th March 2013).
- Gergen, M., and Gergen, K. (2002) ‘Ethnographic representation as relationship’. In A. Bochner and C. Ellis (Eds.) *Ethnographically speaking*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press: 11–33.
- Gill, B. (2001) Who is Brendan? Brendan’s island.
<<http://www.brendans-island.com/brendan.htm>> (accessed 9th July 2012).
- Gillis, J. (2001) ‘Places remote and islanded.’ *Michigan Quarterly Review* 40 (1): 39–58.
- Gillis, J. (2003) ‘Taking history offshore.’ in R. Edmond & V. Smith (Eds.) *Islands in history and representation*. New York: Routledge: 19–31.

- Gillis, J. (2004) *Islands of the mind: how the human imagination created the Atlantic world*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gillis, J. (2012) *The human shore: seacoasts in history*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gillis, J. (2014) 'Not continents in miniature: islands as ecotones.' *Island Studies Journal* 9 (1): 155–166.
- Gimlette, J. (2005) *Theatre of fish: travels through Newfoundland and Labrador*. London: Arrow.
- Glesne, C. (1997) 'That rare feeling: re-presenting research through poetic transcription'. *Qualitative Inquiry* June (3): 202–221.
<<http://qix.sagepub.com/content/3/2/202.abstract>> (accessed 22nd July 2013).
- Glesne, C. (2011) *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction*. Fourth edition. Boston: Pearson International.
- Goldie, M. B. (2011) 'Island theory: the antipodes' in M. McCusker & A. Soares (Eds.) *Islanded identities: constructions of postcolonial cultural insularity*. New York: Rodopi: 1–40.
- Golfman, N. (2008) 'An outsider's eye: Newfoundland culture as defined from without and within.' *Literary Review Canada*, October.
<<http://reviewcanada.ca/magazine/2008/10/an-outsiders-eye/>> (accessed 24th May 2014).
- Gossling, S., and Wall, G. (2007) 'Island tourism.' in G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *A world of islands*. Charlottetown, PE: Island Studies Press: 429–453.
- Government of (NL) Newfoundland and Labrador (2006) *Creative Newfoundland 2006: the blueprint for development and investment in culture*. St. John's, NL.
<<http://www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/publications/2006/culturalplan2006.pdf>> (accessed 28th July 2014).

Government of PEI (Prince Edward Island) (2012) *Planning for a sustainable future: a time for questions*.

<<http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/susfuture.pdf>> (accessed 23rd July 2013).

Government of PEI (Prince Edward Island) (2013) 'History of transportation on PEI'.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/infopei/index.php3?number=56041&lang=E> (accessed 23rd July 2013).

Grant, J. (2009) *Come thou, tortoise*. Toronto, ON: Knopf Canada.

Griffin Trust (2014) The Griffin Poetry Prize.

<<http://www.griffinpoetryprize.com/>> (accessed 3rd December 2012).

GriffithREVIEW (2013) *Tasmania—the tipping point? GriffithREVIEW* 39, January.

Nathan, QLD: Griffith University.

<<https://griffithreview.com/editions/tasmania-the-tipping-point/>>

Hall, S. (1997) 'Old and new identities, old and new ethnicities.' in A. D. King (Ed.), *Culture, globalization and the world-system: contemporary conditions for the representation of culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 41–68.

Halliday, A. (2013) 'The case of the United Nations convention of the law of the sea and the Republic of the Philippines.' Unpublished MA(IS) thesis, University of Prince Edward Island.

Hansen, D. (2007) *David Keeling*. Hobart, TAS: Quintus Publishing.

Harwood A. (2011) 'The political constitution of islandness: the "Tasmanian problem" and ten days on the island.' Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS.

Hau'ofa, E. (1999) 'Our sea of islands.' in V. Hereniko & R. Wilson (Eds.) *Inside out: literature, cultural politics, and identity in the new Pacific*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield: 27–38.

- Hawkins, H. (2011) 'Dialogues and doings: sketching the relationships between geography and art.' *Geography Compass* 5/7: 464–478.
- Hay, P. (1991–92) 'Destabilising Tasmanian politics: the key role of the greens.' *Bulletin for the Centre of Tasmanian Historical Studies*, 3(2): 60–70.
- Hay, P. (1994a) 'Introduction.' in J. De Gryse & A. Sant (Eds.) *Our common ground, a celebration of art, place and environment*. The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Tasmania) and The Centre for Environmental Studies (University of Tasmania): 11–15.
- Hay, P. (1994b) 'The politics of Tasmania's world heritage area: contesting the democratic subject.' *Environmental Politics* 3 (1): 1–21.
- Hay, P. (2002a) *Main currents in western environmental thought*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Hay, P. (2002b) *Vandemonian essays*. Hobart, TAS: Walleah Press.
- Hay, P. (2002c) 'Appreciating *The master's wife* from the other side of the planet.' *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, PE, 18th January: A7
- Hay, P. (2003) 'The poetics of island place: articulating particularity.' *Local Environment* 8 (5): 553–558.
- Hay, P. (2006) 'A phenomenology of islands.' *Island Studies Journal* 8 (2): 209–232.
<<http://www.islandstudies.ca/node/427>>
- Hay, P. (2007) 'Defending the Wild Lands.' in *Endangered: Tasmania's Wild Lands*. Camberwell (AU): Penguin, xiii–xxii.
- Hay, P. (2009) 'Politics and primordial time: Neil Hoffmann's grand and seamless aesthetic.' *Ceramics: Art and Perception* 75: 32–36.
- Hay, P. (2012) 'Shape of the wind: pattern & chaos in Sue Lovegrove's island art.' *Artlink* 32 (1).
<<http://www.artlink.com.au>>

- Hay, P. (2013) 'What the sea portends.' *Island Studies Journal* 8 (2): 209–232.
<<http://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/islandstudies.ca/files/ISJ-8-2-2013-Hay.pdf>>
- Hay, P. (2014) 'Nature, culture: merging principles on Skullbone Plains.' in *The Skullbone experiment*, Hobart, TAS: Tasmanian Land Conservancy: 6–8.
- Hayward, P. (2012) 'Aquapelagos and aquapelagic assemblages.' *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* 6 (1): 1–11.
<<http://www.shimajournal.org/issues/v6n1/c.%20Hayward%20Shima%20v6n1%201-11.pdf>>
- Heffernan, M. (2009) *Rig: an oral history of the Ocean Ranger disaster*. St. John's, NL: Creative.
- Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and time*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Higgins, J. (2008) Arts and Economy. Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage.
<http://www.heritage.nf.ca/arts/arts_economy.html> (accessed 28th July 2014).
- Hiller, J. (2007) 'Robert Bond and the pink, white and green: Newfoundland nationalism in perspective.' *Acadiensis* XXXVI (2): 113–33.
- Hodge, G. (2005) 'An island's edges,' in G. Brazier & N. Doe (Eds.) *Islands of British Columbia*, Proceedings of the islands of British Columbia conference, 20–22nd August 2004. Denman Island: Arts Denman: 10–19.
- Hodgson, R., & L. Alexander (1972) *Towards an objective analysis of special circumstances: Bays, rivers, coastal and oceanic archipelagos, and atolls*. Kingston: University of Rhode Island Law of the Sea Institute.
- Hollis, P. (n.d.) 'The rock which makes Tasmania.' (Review) in *Leatherwood online: Tasmania's Journal of Discovery*.
<<http://www.leatherwoodonline.com/index.php/reviews/comments/the-rock-which-makes-tasmania/>> (accessed 14th August 2014).
- Holm, B. (2000) *Eccentric islands*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

Holyer, N. (2010) 'An indifferent angel.' *LiNQ (Literature in North Queensland): Islands* 37, December. Townsville, QLD: Department of Humanities, School of Arts and Social Sciences, James Cook University: 61–72.

Honey, J. (2013) 'Collaborating with Don Kay.' *Resonate Magazine*.
<<http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/article/collaborating-with-don-kay>>
(accessed 17th August 2014).

(Impac) Impac Dublin Award (2001) '*No great mischief*.'
<<http://www.impacdublinaward.ie/2001/nogreatmischief.htm>> (accessed 1st August 2010).

Ingold, T. (2000) *The perception of environment*. London: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2007) *Lines: a brief history*. London: Routledge.

Inman, J. (2013) 'Maintaining the cultural sustainability of Canada and Prince Edward Island: examples of the role of performing and visual arts in sustainable development,' presented at Global climate change, biodiversity and sustainability: challenges and opportunities conference, Abo Qir Campus, Alexandria, Egypt, 15th–18th April.

Island Institute (n.d.) About us.
<<http://islandinstitute.org/about.php>> (accessed 26th June 2014).

Islands Commission (2009) 'Islands and territorial cohesion.' Green paper on territorial cohesion submission by the CPMR islands commission, Rennes, France.
<http://www.islandscommission.org/pub/news/55_eng_ic_submission_on_territorial_cohesionrevised.pdf> (accessed 15th August 2014).

Janzen, O. (2014) 'Beothuk and Mi'kmaq', *A reader's guide to the history of Newfoundland and Labrador to 1869*.
<http://www2.swgc.mun.ca/nfld_history/nfld_history_beothuk.htm> (accessed 26th January 2012).

Johnson, B. (2001) 'Curator's essay', in *Unsettled, photographs by Scott Walden*. St John's, NL: Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador: 9–15.

- Johnson, J. M. (2002) 'In-depth interviewing,' in J. F. Gubrum & J. A. Holstein (Eds.) *Handbook of interview research context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002: 103–119.
- Johnston, W. (1985) *The story of Bobby O'Malley*. Toronto: HarperCollins.
- Johnston, W. (1990) *The divine Ryans*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Johnston, W. (1998) *The colony of unrequited dreams*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.
- Johnston, W. (1999) *Baltimore's mansion*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
- Johnston, W. (2002) *The navigator of New York*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
- Johnston, W. (2009) *The old lost land of Newfoundland: family, memory, fiction, and myth*. Edmonton, AB: NeWest Press.
- Johnston, W. (2013) *The son of a certain woman*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
- Jones, S. H. (2002) 'Autoethnography: making the personal political.' in J. F. Gubrum & J. A. Holstein (Eds.) *Handbook of interview research context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002: 763–791.
- Kavanagh, P. (1997) *Gaff topsails*. Toronto: Cormorant Books.
- Kelly, U. (1993) *Marketing place: cultural politics, regionalism and reading*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Books.
- King, R. (1993) 'The geographical fascination with islands.' in D. G. Lockhart, D. Drakakis-Smith & J. Schembri (Eds.) *The development process in small island states*. London: Routledge: 13–37.
- Kirkpatrick, J. B. (2006) *The ecologies of paradise: explaining the garden next door*. Hobart, TAS: Pandani Press.
- Knudsen, B. T., & A. M. Waade (Eds.) (2010) *Re-investing authenticity: tourism, place and emotions*. Toronto: Channel View Publications.

- Kolenberg, H. (2005) 'The Tasmanian museum and art gallery: Australia's Cinderella gallery.' in *Considering art in Tasmania*, a reprint of *ART and Australia* 22 (4). Sydney: Fine Arts Press: 473–532.
- Kukatani, M. (2002) 'Books of the times: A reborn criminal distills beauty from a prison's abominable depths.' Review of *Gould's book of fish: a novel in 12 fish* by Richard Flanagan. *New York Times*, 26th March.
 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/26/books/books-times-reborn-criminal-distills-beauty-prison-s-abominable-depths.html>> (accessed 8th June 2014).
- Kull, B. (2004) 'My year alone in the wilderness'. *Canadian Geographic* May/June: 2–12.
- Leaman, D. (2002) *The rock which made Tasmania*. Hobart, TAS: Leaman Geophysics.
- Ledwell, F. (2002) *The north shore of home*. Charlottetown, PE: Acorn Press.
- Ledwell, F. (2006) *The taste of water*. Charlottetown, PE: Acorn Press.
- Lemon, A. & M. Morgan (1986) *Poor souls, they perished: the Cataraqui, Australia's worst shipwreck*. North Melbourne, VIC: Hargreen.
- Lepawsky, J., C. Phan & R. Greenwood (2010) 'Metropolis on the margins: talent attraction and retention to the St John's city-region.' *The Canadian Geographer*, 54 (3): 324–346.
- Lesser, D. (2008) 'They arrest angels in Tasmania.' *Tasmanian Times*, 27th February.
 <<http://tasmaniantimes.com/index.php?/weblog/article/they-arrest-angels-in-tasmania/>> (accessed 17th August 2014).
- Lewincamp, C. (2011b) *Home*. CD recording. Self-published.
- Lloyd, B. (1998) *Beer, blood, and water: nineteen non-fiction stories*. Hobart, TAS: VDL Publications.
- Lockhart, D. (1997) 'Islands and tourism: an overview.' in D. Lockhart & D. Drakakis-Smith (Eds.) *Island tourism: trends and prospects*. London: Pinter: 3–20.

- Loney, J. (1980) *Mysteries of the Bass Strait triangle*. Belmont, VIC: Neptune Press.
- Lonely Planet (2012) Best in travel in 2013—top ten cities.
<<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/themes/best-in-travel/top-10-cities/>> (accessed 19th August 2014).
- Lonely Planet (2014) Introducing Tasmania.
<<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/australia/tasmania>> (accessed 19th August 2014).
- Lopez, B. (1996) 'A literature of place.' *US Society and Values* August.
- Low, C. (1967) *The children of Fogo Island*.
<http://www.nfb.ca/film/children_of_fogo_island> (accessed 13th September 2012).
- MacArthur, R. H., & E. O. Wilson (1967) *Theory of island biogeography*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- MacCannell, D. (1973) 'Staged authenticity: arrangements of social space in tourist settings.' *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (3): 589–603.
- MacDonald, G. E. (2000) *If you're stronghearted: Prince Edward Island in the twentieth century*. Charlottetown, PE: PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation.
- Macfarlane, D. (1992) *Come from away*. London: Abacus. (Published in Canada [1991] as *The danger tree*, Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross.)
- MacLeod, A. (1984) *Canadian literature series*, part 4. Videocassette. Council of Ministers of Education Canada. Calgary, AB: ACCESS Network.
- MacLeod, A. (1999) *No great mischief*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- MacLeod, A. (2000) *Island: the collected stories*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- MacLeod, D. V. L. (2004) *Tourism, globalisation and cultural change: an island community perspective*. Clevedon, ENG: Channel View Publications.
- Maddox, S. (1999-2006) 'Where can I touch the edge of heaven?'
<<http://www.explorefaith.org/mystery/mysteryThinPlaces.html>> (accessed 3rd July 2012).

- Major, D. (2004) 'Philip Wolfhagen.' Review *of the inner edge*, Academy Gallery, University of Tasmania, Inveresk, 14th June–9th July 2004, in *Artlink* 24 (3).
<<https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/2218/philip-wolfhagen/>> (accessed 25th April 2011).
- Malpas, J. E. (1999) *Place and experience: a philosophical topography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Malpas, J. E. (2011) 'Why island studies?' Discussion. School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, 16th March 2011.
- Maritime History Archive (2012) 'No great future': government sponsored resettlement in Newfoundland and Labrador since confederation.
<http://www.mun.ca/mha/resettlement/rs_intro.php> (accessed 18th February 2012).
- Marshall, J. (1999) 'Insiders and outsiders: the role of insularity, migration and modernity on Grand Manan, New Brunswick.' in R. King & J. Connell (Eds.) *Small worlds, global lives: islands and immigration*. New York: Pinter: 95–113.
- Martijn, C. A. (2003) 'Early Mi'kmaq presence in southern Newfoundland: an ethnohistorical perspective, c.1500-1763.' *Newfoundland Quarterly* 19 (1): 44–101.
- Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative researching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- McCall, G. (1994) 'Nissology: a proposal for consideration.' *Journal of the Pacific Society* 63-64 17 (2–3): 106–93.
- McCusker, M. & A. Soares (2011) 'Islanded identities: constructions of postcolonial cultural insularity', in M. McCusker & A. Soares (Eds.) *Islanded identities: constructions of postcolonial cultural insularity*. New York: Rodopi: xi–xxvii.
- McKay, D. (2006) *Strike/slip*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- McKay, D. (2011) *The shell of the tortoise*. Wolfville, NS: Gaspereau Press.
- McKay, D. (2012) *Paradoxides*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

- McLachlan N. (Ed.) (1964 [1827]) *Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux and dictionary of the flash language*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- McLennan, R. (2007) 12 or 20 questions: with Stan Dragland. 4th October.
<<http://12or20questions.blogspot.ca/2007/10/12-or-20-questions-with-stan-dragland.html>> (accessed 25th June 2014).
- Mellin, R. (2003) *Tilting: house launching, slide hauling, potato trenching, and other tales from a Newfoundland fishing village*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Mels, T. (2004) 'Introduction: lineages of a geography of rhythms.' in T. Mels (Ed.) *Re-animating places: a geography of rhythms*. Aldershot, ENG: Ashgate.
- Memorial University of Newfoundland (n.d.) Archival treasures.
<http://www.heritage.nf.ca/cns_archives/008riggsjuly28_1994.html> (accessed 21st September 2013).
- Mercury, The* (2011) 'Descend into the chamber.' *Mercury on Saturday*, 22nd January.
http://www.themercury.com.au/article/2011/01/22/33155_editorial.html (accessed 26th January 2011).
- Mercury, The* (2014) 'Games boss regrets Tassie slight.' 5th, 6th August.
<<http://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/aussie-commonwealth-games-boss-says-tassie-is-on-swim-uniform-but-regrets-apparent-slight/story-fnj4f7k1-1227013219541>> (accessed 31st August 2014).
- Merleu-Ponty, M. (1962) *Phenomenology of perception*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1973) *The prose of the world*. Evanston: North-western University Press.
- Momatiuk, Y. & J. Eastcott (1998) *This marvellous terrible place: images of Newfoundland and Labrador*. Toronto: Firefly Books.

- (MONA) Museum of Old and New Art (2011) Museum of old and new art.
<<http://mofo.net.au>> (accessed 1st June 2011).
- Moore, L. (2006) 'The ends of the earth.' *The Walrus* 3 (6): 84–7.
<<http://thewalrus.ca/the-ends-of-the-earth/>>
- Moore, L. (2009) *February*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
- Moore, L. (2011) 'Notes from Newfoundland.' *The Walrus*, May.
<<http://walrusmagazine.com/articles/2011.05-society-notes-from-newfoundland/>>
(accessed 12th February 2012).
- Moore, L. (2013) *Caught*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
- Morgan, B. (1992) *Random passage*. St. John's, NL: Breakwater Books.
- Morgan, B. (1994) *Waiting for time*. St. John's, NL: Breakwater Books.
- Morgan, B. (2007) *Cloud of bone*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
- Morrissey, D. (2005) *Sylvanus Now*. Toronto: Penguin Books Canada.
- Murray, J. (1999) 'Introduction.' in J. Murray (Ed.) *The seacoast reader*. New York: Lyons.
- Museum of Australian Democracy (2011) Documenting a democracy: Australia's story.
<<http://foundingdocs.gov.au/enlargement-eid-49-pid-66.html>> (accessed 27th May 2014).
- Narváez, P. (2005) 'Foreword: Ron Hynes, the man of a thousand songs.' in E. West (Ed.) *Songs of Ron Hynes, volume 1*. Ladle Cove, NL: Vinland Music.
- Natural Resources Canada (2012) The atlas of Canada, sea islands.
<<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/learningresources/facts/islands.html/#newfoundland>> (accessed 1st June 2013).

- Nelson, R. & J. O'Donovan (1999–2003) *Convicts to Australia: A guide to researching your convict ancestors*.
<http://members.iinet.net.au/~perthdps/convicts/> (accessed 17th August 2014).
- Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage (1997) *The Beothuk*.
 <<http://www.heritage.nf.ca/aboriginal/beothuk.html>> (accessed 2nd April 2014).
- Newman, T. (2005) *Becoming Tasmania*. Hobart, TAS: Parliamentary History Project.
 <<http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/php/BecomingTasmania/ConvictFreedom08.pdf>> (accessed 17th August 2014).
- Newton, M., & P. Hay (2007) *The forests*. Hobart, TAS: Matthew Newton Photography.
- Nichols, W. J. (2014) *Blue mind: the surprising science that shows how being near, in, on, or under water can make you happier, healthier, more connected, and better at what you do*. New York: Little Brown.
- Nicholson, C. (1985) 'Signatures of time: Alistair MacLeod and his short stories.' *Canadian Literature* 107: 90–101.
- (NL) Newfoundland and Labrador (2011) 'Central Newfoundland offers adventures on land and sea.'
 <<http://www.newfoundlandlabrador.com/TheLatest/BlogPost/35>> (accessed 25th July 2014).
- (NL) Newfoundland and Labrador (2013) 'Now will the world recognise us?'
 <<http://www.gov.nl.ca/brand/>> (accessed 27th August 2014).
- (NL) Newfoundland and Labrador (2014) *Iceberg alley*. Promotional video.
 <<http://www.newfoundlandlabrador.com/AboutThisPlace/Videos/PLE1BB7A8A2F97332B>> (accessed 6th March 2014).
- Norman, J. (2003) 'Ten Days that shook the literary world.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14th March.

- <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/13/1047431149291.html>> (accessed 9th June 2011).
- O'Donohue, J. (1999) *Eternal echoes*. New York: Harper Collins.
- O'Leary, S., & R. Pelley (2010) *Island maid: voices of outport women*. St John's, NL: Breakwater Books.
- O'Reagan, S. (2012) W5: finding a sustainable future for outport Newfoundland. <<http://www.ctvnews.ca/w5-finding-a-sustainable-future-for-outport-newfoundland-1.769387>> (accessed 5th October 2012).
- Ouston, A. (2014) 'Dessaix: a grand narrative.' Interview in *Island* 138: 27-31.
- Overton, J. (1996) *Making a world of difference: essays on tourism, culture and development in Newfoundland*. St John's, NL: ISER.
- Oxley, L. (2005) *Sitting with Cézanne*. Wagtail 41. Warners Bay, NSW: Picaro Press.
- Oxley, L. (2008) *Buoyancy*. Parkville, VIC: 5 Islands Press.
- Oxley, L. (2011b) 'Isolations.' *Island* 124, Autumn. Hobart, TAS: Island Magazine: 110–112.
- Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania (2008) Shipwrecks of Tasmania: Cataraqui. <<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=1729>> (accessed 5th September 2014).
- Percy, D., S. Blackmore, and Q. C. B. Cronk (2007) 'Island flora,' in G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *A world of islands: an island studies reader*. Charlottetown, PE: Island Studies Press: 175–198.
- Péron, F. (2004) 'The contemporary lure of the island', in G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 95 (3): 326–339.
- Pierson, S. (1996) 'Medieval survivals: reflections on Ron Hynes' cryer's paradise.' *Newfoundland Studies* 13 (1): 30–78.

- Platt, D. (2004) 'Islandness.' In P. Conkling & D. D. Platt (Eds.) *Holding ground: the best of Island Journal, 1984–2004*. Rockland, ME: Island Institute: 1–25.
- Pocius, G. L. (1996) 'Folklore and the creation of national identities: a North American perspective.' *Journal of the Baltic Institute of Folklore* 1.
- Polack, F. (2000) 'Writing and rewriting the island: Tasmania, politics, and contemporary Australian fiction.' in L Brinklow, F. Ledwell & J. Ledwell (Eds.) *Message in a bottle: proceedings from an international conference, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, June 28–30, 1998*. Charlottetown, PE: Institute of Island Studies: 215–29.
- Polack, F. M. (2002) 'Littoral fictions: writing Tasmania and Newfoundland.' Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Tasmania.
- Polack, F. (2006) 'Taking the waters: abjection and homecoming in *The shipping news* and *Death of a river guide*.' *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 41: 93–109.
- Polack, F. (2008) 'Whose bones?' Review in *Canadian Literature* 198: 149–151.
<http://canlit.ca/reviews/whose_bones> (accessed 2nd April 2014).
- Polack, F. (2010) 'Tasmanian visions: landscapes in writing, art and photography by Roslynn D. Haynes.' Review. *Australian Literary Studies* 25 (3): 79–81.
- Polack, F. (2012) 'Mirror islands: the colonial pasts of Newfoundland and Tasmania.' Public lecture, 25th February, Marine Institute, St John's, NL.
- Porteous, J. D. (1990) *Landscapes of the mind: worlds of sense and metaphor*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Porter, B. (1995) 'Ambivalence is the best I can do: an interview with Mary Dalton.' *TickleAce* 29, Spring/Summer: 17–35.
<http://collections.mun.ca/PDFs/cns_period/TickleAce1995no29SpringSummer.pdf>
- Prendergast, M., C. Leggo & P. Sameshima (Eds.) (2009) *Poetic inquiry*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

- Proulx, A. (1993) *The shipping news*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Purves, R. (2014) 'Foreword.' in *The Skullbone experiment*. Hobart, TAS: Tasmanian Land Conservancy: 3.
- Putz, G. (1984) 'On islanders.' in *Holding ground: the best of the Island Journal*, 1984–2004. Rockland, ME: Island Institute: 28–31.
<<http://www.islandinstitute.org/publications/Holding-Ground/12250/>>
- Quammen D. (1996) *The song of the dodo*. New York: Scribner.
- Rankin, S. (2013) 'Tasmanian utopias.' Griffith REVIEW Edition 39: TASMANIA—the tipping point? January 2013.
<<https://griffithreview.com/articles/tasmanian-utopias/>> (accessed 28th July 2014).
- Relph, E. (1976) *Place and placelessness*. London: Pion.
- Richardson, L. (2002) 'Poetic representation of interviews.' in J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.) *Handbook of interview research context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE: 877–891.
- Riche, Ed (1997) *Rare birds*. Toronto: Doubleday.
- Romei, S. (2011) 'Vogel winner's trip to heart of darkness.' *The Australian*, 28th April.
<<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/vogel-winners-trip-to-heart-of-darkness/story-e6frg6nf-1226045868394>> (accessed 28th May 2012).
- Ronström, O. (2009) 'Island words, island worlds: the origins and meanings of words for "islands" in north-west Europe.' *Island Studies Journal* 4 (2): 163–182.
- Ronström, O. (2012) 'Finding their place: islands as locus and focus.' *Cultural Geographies* 20 (2): 153–165.
- Royle, S. (2001) *A geography of islands: small island insularity*. London: Routledge.
- Royle, S. (2007) 'Island definitions and typology.' in G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *A world of islands*. Charlottetown, PE: Island Studies Press: 33–56.

- Said, E. (1979) *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Sanati, M. (2013) 'Top 10 destinations for 2013.' *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, Canada, 5th January.
 <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/travel/destinations/top-10-destinations-for-2013/article6944685/>> (accessed 26th July 2014).
- Sandwith, G. & H. Sandwith (1959) *The miracle hunters*. London: Rider.
- Sanyal, A. (2013) 'Wayne Johnston's *The son of a certain woman* is expertly discomfiting.' Review. *The Globe and Mail*, 13th September.
 <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media/book-reviews/wayne-johnstons-the-son-of-a-certain-woman-is-expertly-discomfiting/article14317062/>> (accessed 7th June 2014).
- Schalansky, J. (2010) *Atlas of remote islands: fifty islands I have not visited and never will*. London: Penguin Books.
- Seamon, D. (n.d.) 'Phenomenology, place, environment, and architecture: a review.' *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter*
 <http://www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/Seamon_reviewEAP.htm> (accessed 19th November 2013).
- Seamon, D. (1979) *A geography of the lifeworld: movement, rest, and encounter*. London: Palgrave.
- Shakespeare, N. (2004) *In Tasmania*. North Sydney, NSW: Random House Australia.
- Sheller, M. (2012) 'The islanding effect: post-disaster mobility systems and humanitarian logistics in Haiti.' *Cultural Geographies*, 20 (2): 185–204.
- Shorefast Foundation (2012) Finding new ways for an old continuity.
 <<http://www.shorefast.org>> (accessed 20th September 2012).
- Simon and Schuster (n.d.) *Song of the dodo: island biogeography in an age of extinction* by David Quammen.

<<http://books.simonandschuster.ca/Song-of-the-Dodo/David-Quammen/9780684827124> (accessed 1st August 2010).

Smith, F. (2014) 'Shoreline best for EI fairness.' Letters to the editor, *The Guardian*, Charlottetown, PE, 4th March: A6.

Smith, P. (2011) 'The crowded mind of Johnny Depp.' *Vanity Fair*, February.
<<http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/features/2011/01/johnny-depp-201101>>
(accessed 25th November 2013).

Statistics Canada (2011a) Quarterly Demographic Estimate.
<<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=91-002-X&lang=eng>>
(accessed 24th January 2012).

Statistics Canada (2011b) Census profile.
<<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=POPC&Code1=0792&Geo2=PR&Code2=10&Data=Count&SearchText=St.%20John%27s&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>> (accessed 21st June 2014).

Statistics Greenland (2014) Greenland in figures.
<<http://www.stat.gl/publ/en/GF/2014/pdf/Greenland%20in%20Figures%202014.pdf>>
> (accessed 1st July 2014).

Statistics Iceland (2014) Population in the second quarter.
><http://www.statice.is/statistics/population>> (accessed 25th September 2014).

Steffler, J. (1985) *The grey islands*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Steinberg, P., E. Nyman & M. J. Caraccioli (2012) 'Atlas swam: freedom, capital, and floating sovereignties in the seasteading vision.' *Antipode* 44 (4):1532–1550.

Stone, C. (1998) 'Introduction.' in *Gerald Squires' journey: selections from four decades of work*. St. John's, NL: Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Story, G. (1982) *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Stratford, E. (2003) 'Flows and boundaries: small island discourses and the challenge of sustainability, community and local environments.' *Local Environment* 8 (5): 495–499.
- Stratford, E., G. Baldacchino, E. McMahon, C. Farbotko & A. Harwood (2011) 'Envisioning the Archipelago.' *Island Studies Journal* 6 (2): 113–130.
<<http://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/islandstudies.ca/files/ISJ-6-2-2011-Stratford-et-al.pdf>>
- Stratford, E. (2014) Pers. e-mail corresp., 3rd June.
- Stubbs, B. (2001) 'Bullseye for Archer.' *The Mercury on Saturday*, Hobart, TAS, 31st March: 34, 36.
- Sugars, C. (2010) 'Genetic phantoms: geography, history, and ancestral inheritance in Kenneth Harvey's *The town that forgot how to breathe* and Michael Crummey's *Galore*.' *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 25 (1): 7–36.
- Sunny Spells (2009) Random musings from Ireland (and other strange places): 'Mapping the world from where you are'.
<<http://sunnyspells.wordpress.com/2009/04/07/mapping-the-world-from-where-you-are/>>
- Tambar, J. (2009) '10 years later, Mel Lastman proud he called in army.'
<http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2009/01/11/10_years_later_mel_lastman_proud_he_called_in_army.html> (accessed 21st November 2013).
- Taste Festival (n.d.) Taste festival.
<http://tastefestival.com.au> (accessed 1st June 2011).
- Ten Days on the Island* (2001) 'Ten days on the island 30th March–8th April 2001.' [Festival program brochure] Hobart, TAS: Ten Days on the Island: 1–49.
- Ten Days on the Island* (2011a) 'Ten days 2011 statement of activity.'
<<http://tendaysontheisland.com/>> (accessed 26th January 2011).

Ten Days on the Island (2011b) 'Youth theatre island exchange project program.'

<<http://tendaysontheisland.org/ten-days-2011-program/the-youth-theatre-island-exchange-project>> (accessed 26th January 2011).

Thomas, H. (2010) Interview with Pete Hay and Laurie Brinklow, School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, 1st December.

Thomas, S. (2002) *Shacks: no. 1 Doctor's Rocks/Titania's Palace* (DVD). Hobart, TAS: A ROAR FILM Production.

Thomas, S. (2009) 'Nissopoesis: visuality and aesthetics in poetic inquiry.' in M. Prendergast, C. Leggo & P. Sameshima (Eds.) *Poetic inquiry: vibrant voices in the social sciences*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers: 127–132.

Thompson, R. (2011) Town of Fogo Island Order.

<<http://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/Regulations/rc110003.htm>> (accessed 3rd October 2012).

Timms, P. (2005) *Philip Wolfhagen*. Hobart, TAS: Quintus Publishing.

Timms, P. (2009) 'Four Tasmanian painters: Burns, Keeling, Wastell & Wolfhagen.' Exhibition catalogue. East Perth: Holmes à Court Gallery, in association with Bett Gallery Hobart, TAS. 3rd July–16th August 2009.

(TNL) Theatre Newfoundland and Labrador. (n.d.) Youth theatre island exchange project.

<<http://www.theatrenewfoundland.com/exchange.html>> (accessed 2nd June 2011).

(Tourism NLa) Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador (n.d.) People and culture.

<<http://www.newfoundlandlabrador.com/AboutThisPlace/PeopleCulture>> (accessed 26th January 2012).

(Tourism NLb) Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador (n.d.) Geography.

<<http://www.newfoundlandlabrador.com/AboutThisPlace/Geography>> (accessed 26th January 2012).

Tourism Tasmania (2012) Tourism Tasmania survey: table 1d places visited on this trip. Total visitors aged 14 years and over.

<<http://webreporter.asteroid.com.au/webreporter/ttreports/index.cfm?event=showPeriodicReport&styleName=PrComp&reportName=%2FTASMANIAN+VISITOR+SURVEY%2F7+PLACES+VISITED%2F%2FTable+1d+Places+Visited+on+This+Trip.xml&format=round-100&reportTitle=Table+1d+Places+Visited+on+This+Trip&table=1&column=46>> (accessed 4th October 2012).

Town of Tilting (2012) 'Welcome to the Town of Tilting, Fogo Island.'

<<http://www.townoftilting.com>> (accessed 5th October 2012).

Trinity College Dublin (2012) The Book of Kells.

<<http://www.tcd.ie/Library/bookofkells/book-of-kells/>> (accessed 3rd July 2012).

Tromifov, T. (2012) 'Fogo Island a hotspot for artists?'

<<http://mercadonews.com/portal/blog-blog-2012/234-fogo-island-a-hotspot-for-artists.html>> (accessed 1st October 2012).

Tsai, H-M., and E. Clark (2003) 'Nature-society interactions on islands: introduction.' *Geografiska Annaler* 85 B (4): 187–189.

Tuan, Y-F. (1971) 'Geography, phenomenology, and the study of human nature.' *The Canadian Geographer*, 15 (3): 181–92.

Tuan, Y-F. (1974) *Topophilia: a study of environmental perception, attitude and values: study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Tucker, W. (2010) 'The recordings of Newfoundland and Labrador: 1970–1979.' *Newfoundland Quarterly* 103 (3).

<<http://www.newfoundlandquarterly.ca/issue438/recordings.php>> (accessed 6th March 2013).

Turnbull, K. (2009) 'Bishop and Clerk trail, TAS.' *Australian Geographic*, 14th September>

<<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/outdoor/adventure/2009/09/bishop-and-clerk-trail,-tas>> (accessed 24th August 2014).

(UCLG) United Cities and Local Governments (2013) Culture, a crucial dimension of development and a key tool for the success of the post-2015 agenda.

<http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/UCLG%20Brief_Culture%20and%20Development%20-%20January%202013.pdf> (accessed 31st March 2013).

UNESCO (2012) Culture for sustainable development.

<<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/the-way-forward/>> (accessed 5th April 2013)

US Census Bureau (2014) New York County, New York.

<<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36061.html>> (accessed 1st July 2004).

van Duzer, C. (2006) 'From Odysseus to Robinson Crusoe: a survey of early western island literature.' *Island Studies Journal* 1 (1): 143–62.

van Manen, M. (1990) *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, ON: The Althouse Press.

Vannini, P. (2011) 'Mind the gap: the *tempo rubato* of dwelling in lineups.' *Mobilities*, 6 (2): 273–299.

Vannini, P. (2012) *Ferry tales: mobility, place, and time on Canada's west coast*. New York: Routledge.

Vannini, P., G. Baldacchino, L. Guay, P. E. Steinberg & S. Royle (2009) 'Recontinentalizing Canada: Arctic ice's liquid modernity and the imagining of a Canadian archipelago.' *Island Studies Journal* 4 (2): 121–138.

Vannini, P. & J. Taggart, J. (2012) 'Doing islandness: a non-representational approach to an island's sense of place.' *Cultural Geographies* 20 (2): 225–242.

Vigneau, J-Y. (n.d.) Artist's statement.

<<http://www.vigjy.net/>> (accessed 20th January 2014).

- Vigneau, J-Y. (2009) *Utopiae insulae figura*. Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, QC: Action Art Actuel.
- von Stieglitz, K. R. (1966) 'Howe, Michael, 1787–1818.' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1. Canberra: Australian National University.
<<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/howe-michael-2206>> (accessed 17th August 2014)
- Vowles, G. (2011) 'Brush with greatness.' *The Mercury*, 1st January: 14–15.
- Walker, P. (1989) 'The United Tasmania Group: an analysis of the world's first green Party.' in P. Hay, R. Eckersley & G. Holloway (Eds.) *Environmental politics in Australia and New Zealand*. Hobart, TAS: Centre for Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania: 161–174.
- Warrington, E. & D. Milne (2007) 'Island governance.' In G. Baldacchino (Ed.) *A world of islands*. Charlottetown, PE: Institute of Island Studies: 379–427.
- Weale, D. (1991) 'Islandness.' *Island Journal* 8. Rockland, ME: Island Institute: 1–82.
- Weale, D. (1992) *Them times*. Charlottetown, PE: Institute of Island Studies.
- Weale, D. (1998) *A long way from the road*. Charlottetown, PE: Acorn Press.
- Weale, D. (2007) *Chasing the shore*. Charlottetown, PE: Tangle Lane.
- Weale, D. (2011) Shore walkers: a company of friends.
<<http://www.shorewalkers.ca/>> (accessed 11th July 2012).
- Weiner, E. (2012) Where heaven and earth come closer. *New York Times*, 11th March 2012.
<<http://travel.nytimes.com/2012/03/11/travel/thin-places-where-we-are-jolted-out-of-old-ways-of-seeing-the-world.html?pagewanted=all>> (accessed 3rd July 2012).
- Wells, K. (2013) 'Punt race open to everyone.' *The Pilot*, 24th April.
<<http://www.lportepilot.ca/News/Local/2013-04-24/article-3226445/Punt-race-open-to-everyone/1>> (accessed 6th May 2014).

- Wendt, P. (2012) 'Michael Flaherty: The Grey Islands', 4th August–23rd December, 2012 Exhibition folder, Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown, PE.
- West, E. (Ed.) (2005) *Songs of Ron Hynes, volume 1*. Ladle Cove, NL: Vinland Music.
- Whey Consulting. (2009) 'Fogo Island cooperation initiative committee final report – feasibility study considering one municipal council for Fogo Island, November 2009.'
- <<http://www.municipalitiesnl.com>> (accessed 3rd October 2012).
- Wiley, M. (2011) *Rig: an oral history of the Ocean Ranger disaster*. Review. *Oral History Review* 38 (2): 448–450.
- Williams, S. (2012) 'Virtually impossible: Deleuze and Derrida on the political problem of islands (and island studies),' *Island Studies Journal* 7 (2): 215–234.
- Wilson, R. (2011) *The roving party*. Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Winter, M. (2010) *The death of Donna Whalen*. Toronto: Penguin Books Canada.
- Winter, K. (2005) 'The Man of a Thousand Songs.' In E. West (Ed.) *Songs of Ron Hynes, volume 1*. Ladle Cove, NL: Vinland Music.
- Winter, K. (1991) 'Communion with the silent centre: a visit to Gerald Squires' studio.' *Sunday Express*, St John's, NL, 3rd March.
- Wood, D. (2003) *The alphabet of light and dark*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Wood, D. (2008) 'Writing Tasmania's "different soul."' *Island Studies Journal* 3 (2): 153–162.
- Wright, W. (1995) 'Islomania.' Charlottetown, PE: unpublished essay.
- Young, L. (2000) *Islands: portraits of miniature worlds*. New York: Freeman and Company.
- Youth Theatre Island Exchange Project video (2011) Videotaped 1st April 2011, Launceston, Tasmania.

Zenith, R. (Ed., Tr.) (1998) *Fernando Pessoa & co. selected poems of Fernando Pessoa*. New York: Grove Press.

Interviews

- Adams, P. (2011a) Interview, Roaring Beach, TAS: 6th May.
- Barker, M. (2011) Interview, Hobart, TAS: 24th May.
- Benson, C. (2013) Telephone interview (with Sheryl MacKay), Piers Island, BC: 29th April.
- Boulter, M. (2011) Interview, Hobart, TAS: 14th April.
- Cameron, J. (2011) Interview, Bruny Island, TAS: 10th April.
- Campbell, R. (2011) Interviews: Somerset, TAS: 21st February and 18th March.
- Chinnery, R. (2013) Telephone interview (with Sheryl MacKay): Hornby Island, BC, 29th April.
- Clark, J. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 12th February.
- Cobb, Z. (2012a) Interview, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island, NL: 17th February.
- Crummey, M. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 9th February.
- Dalton, M. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 18th February.
- Devereux, D. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 21st February.
- Doyle, M. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 17th February.
- Dragland, S. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 30th January.
- Eberhard, A. (2011) Interviews: Tinderbox, TAS: 21st March, 11th April.
- Egan, M. ((2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 15th February.
- Enguehard, F. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 9th February.
- Hay, P. (2011) Interviews: Hobart, TAS: 25th January, 26th January, 7th April.

- Hodgins, J. (2013) Telephone interview (with Sheryl MacKay), Victoria, BC: 25th April.
- House, D. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 8th February.
- Jarvis, D. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 7th February.
- Johnson, B. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 15th February.
- Johnston, W. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 27th September.
- Jones, A. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 15th February.
- Kay, D. (2011) Interview, Taroona, TAS: 25th May.
- Keefe, M. (2014) Skype interview, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island, NL: 9th February.
- Keeling, D. (2011) Interview, North Hobart, TAS: 12th May.
- King, V. (2011) Interview. Bruny Island, TAS: 11th April.
- Lewincamp, C. (2011) Interview, Hobart, TAS: 1st June.
- McKay, D. (2012) Interview, Charlottetown, PE: 3rd December.
- Moore, L. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 20th February.
- Morash, T. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 21st February.
- Morgan, B. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 22nd February.
- Moyes, L. (2012) Interview, St John's, NL: 15th February.
- Musgrave, S. (2013) Telephone interview (with Sheryl MacKay), Haida Gwaii, BC: 15th April.
- Norgate, S. (2013) Telephone interview (with Sheryl MacKay), Gabriola Island, BC: 25th April.
- Osmond, L. (2012) Interview, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island, NL: 17th February.

- Osmond, W. (2012) Interview, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island, NL: 17th February.
- Oxley, L. (2011a) Interview, Charlottetown, PE, 6th October.
- Penton, C. (2012) Interview, Tilting, Fogo Island, NL: 17th February.
- Stanley, J. (2012) Interview, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island, NL: 17th February.
- Steffler, J. (2013) Interview, Maberly, ON: 23rd February.
- Streetly, J. (2013) Telephone interview (with Sheryl MacKay), Tofino, BC: 25th April.
- Thomas, S. (2011) Interview, Hobart, TAS: 17th May.
- Thurston, H. (2011) Interview. Tidnish Bridge, NS: 30th December.
- Walter, B. (2011) Interview, Hobart, TAS: 18th April.
- Wastell, R. (2011) Interview, Hobart, TAS: 21st April.
- Weale, D. (2012) Interview, Charlottetown, PE: 11th April.
- Wolfhagen, P. (2011) Interview, Longford, TAS: 27th April
- Wood, D. (2011) Interviews, Hobart, TAS: 3rd May, 18th May
- Young, A. (2012) Interview, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island, NL: 22nd October
- Younger, H. (2011) Interview, Sanford, South Arm, TAS: 3rd May

Appendix A: The poems

Always leaving
(for Michaye Boulter)

The sea your road
the hole in the sky
your light to travel by

You learn to climb before you can walk
swim before you can talk the language of
wind that lures you to shore
then makes you leave again

You learn down by the tilt of the deck
up by the tilt of the stars
numbers by counting the whites of the waves
and letters by tracing clouds edged by the colours that become your words
that run into sky and water
bleeding the hundred shades of blue
across your canvas
that is your leaving now

Today the sky a curtain you paint
to see what lies behind

Lisa's sense of water
(For Lisa Moore)

Summers around the bay
there's a different sense of time, of beauty
and enough quiet to sort of settle
dig deep

The rhythm of the North Atlantic pounds her senses
how it works frightens her
the power of it, the fragility of it, the mystery of it
the unimaginability of eighty-four men
dying out there with nothing

But she takes it as the gift it is
Of course, I didn't write that story, she says
I wrote a shadow of that story

She'd like to be unfettered by notions of nationalism
or political affiliations
or even a sense of belonging

She'd like to step into the skin of anyone anywhere
or any place

But, she says, as she ages, her body connects her to place
The concrete and the imagined—
how they inform each other, yes?

She knows there are powerful stories
left to be written
Swimming in the North Atlantic
she recognises the pull

Necklace for the Sawyer's Wife
(for Vicki King)

Before Blackstone
you planted English gardens
and reaped what you sowed in paint.

In time your palette washed out
drained itself of colour
narrowed to a single brushstroke

dun

the colour of the earth-
line that led you here
to Bruny Island on the D'Entrecasteaux Channel.

Taking pictures by canoe you followed a heron round the point
FOR SALE on Blackstone Bay a sign

for fifty clapped-out acres
and a house looking out at the channel that brings you
twists of history in rope and net
memories etched in driftwood and glass and bone
peeled, weathered, wizened, worn
like the world you painted yourself out of

and the story of sawyers rowing two black men and with Truganini watching they
push them over the side and when they reach out for help the sawyers chop off their
hands then rape her over and over as her husband-who-would-have-been sinks
beneath the skin of water
flesh of sky.

The land gives up its stories, too
where thistles choke out grass
and burnt-out grass-trees shake their angry manes
the sod hut George Augustus Robinson built

to launch his Friendly Mission
bleached skeletons of wallabies and sheep
caught in barbed-wire fencing
rusted harrows and discs and wire.

Hanging up your brushes
you jumble your sheds with wood and metal and glass
that you piece together to give this place back its voice
your tools a Stanley knife
a saw
and a hand drill for holes
to thread the wire through.

Verdigris faucet spouts feather water
a chipped enamel jug waters feather petals
rusted hoops halo life-size angels
and everywhere are the birds, swan-necked, squat
their song no longer silenced.

You bend barbed wire into fingers
gnarl the points into knuckle joints
hang hands from a leg-iron chain to make
a necklace for the sawyer's wife.

Old Sharemen
(for Winston Osmond)

Here at the end of Herring Cove Road, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island
fishing's like breathing
your people can't give it up

it's something born into them
even though you say
and I don't care who hears this
the fishery never was, and never will be
a good living

Like everyone did
You went to Toronto, for only two weeks, then Alberta
Faro Mine in the Yukon for longer
but home nagged
the elastic band hauls you back all the time
I knew that if I stayed there this long
I would have this much money
and be this happy
Or I can go home and be this happy
broke

Here at the end of Herring Cove Road, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island
 this island is yours, you carry it in your head
 not like the mainland, too big to own
that to me is like a bird in a cage

Here at the end of Herring Cove Road, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island
 the water's your clock, your playground
We got up in the morning
and like ducks went to the water
even the smallest one
crawled

Here at the end of Herring Cove Road, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island
 the tide is your calendar, marks your days, weeks and months
The seagulls told us when winter was over
the 29th of March, the gulls would come back
the 28th of June, the terns
And with the terns there was salmon, the capelin, and then there was the cod
Because the cod followed the capelin, the bait, right? Clockwork

Here at the end of Herring Cove Road, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island
 I can walk right into your paintings
 the old fish store
 the salt box houses
This one's Aunt Sadie's
grand old soul, knitting in the rocking chair, by the stove
I sold Aunt Sadie mats for her floors
Her house deserves to be in a painting
And this one, the old fella who lives in the white house in Barr'd Islands
he's 92. His wife's there, too

Here at the end of Herring Cove Road, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island
 you paint old sharemen, caps turned just so
 fishing cod traps
 with nets and forks
 in trap skiffs and punts
 suspenders hold up baggy green pants
 back straight as the dip net they're hauling with
Buddy got just as much expression as the guy, back on
Was never any good at painting faces

It was the hardest work, the less paid work
and the best work I've ever done in my life

Here at the end of Herring Cove Road, Shoal Bay, Fogo Island
I paint what I know
I paint what I see
I paint what's here

*I know if I painted in the Yukon or anywheres else
I'd still be painting stages*

So it begins at Hastings Bay
(for Don and Frances Kay)

Looking to buy land
in the woods on the edge of remoteness
she takes you to Hastings Bay

dreary day, grey sky, light rain

she points to the hill
What do you think of that place, for a house?

You say, *Do I have to get out of the car?*

Yes, she says
Come on, she says
Over to the bay, she says
Look—

Following her arm
you see dimpled-skin bay
circles encircling circles

A faint sheen of sound nuzzles your ear and
the bay becomes your staff
the water pocks your notes

The wind's tendrils the stems
and its gusts the flags

the sustain pedal the silver
that holds it all together
to make this little dance of rain for flute

You turn, a nine o'clock pause
woods still
but then a puff, a wriggle
as air gentles a leaf
music for an image, then another
round you turn: six, three, then back to twelve and nine
notes collide

Fired by these images
you make sound collages
of red and blue
warm in fulsome summer

cold in barren plains
 harmony from remoteness
 rhythm from isolation
 nostalgia — *almost* — from the choice of intervals
 and patterning — *always patterning*

The spaces between the highs and lows
 layer the colours to mirror the contours
 and textures
 of raw rugged land
 and a heart laid bare
 in tune with the scapes of your birth
 —sound, land, time, love—

A rondo for your island
 Tasmania

Wayne Johnston talks about the weather
(For Wayne Johnston)

When I was a kid
 we had two channels in Newfoundland: CBC and CTV.

I come from an anti-confederate family
 so we weren't allowed to watch CBC.
 That was the Canadian channel.

On CTV there was a weatherman named Bob Lewis.
 And he'd do the weather.
 And he would always get it wrong.
 But it wasn't his fault.
 It was nobody's fault.
 Weather's hard to predict, you know?

In the world around us
 there are three or four people
 whose professions are to tell the future.
 Aside from fortune-tellers,
 there are people who can predict the stock market.
 and people who can predict the weather.

So when you look at the weather map on TV
 and see a low in, say, New York or Boston,
 that's tomorrow in Newfoundland.

We're getting everybody else's used weather.
 It's being handed down to us.

And then after it did whatever it would do to Newfoundland,
it sort of launched out into the open Atlantic,
and never went anywhere,
just some nebulous elsewhere.

That's how I thought about it.
Time and space were linked like that map.
I knew that weather moved from west to east.
And time was moving west to east.
Time was moving toward the island.

**

You know that song,
'Thank God we're surrounded by water'?
I really don't like being surrounded by water.

To tell you the truth,
I've never liked the ocean.
You know how they used to talk about computers
not being user-friendly?
That's how I feel about the ocean.

All you could do was look at it.
It was too damn cold to swim in.
And there was no other side to it.
It didn't seem to lead anywhere.

I used to think there was no more forlorn a sight
than to see a ship leave St. John's Harbour
all alone at twilight
and head out into that abyss.

**

There are two animating myths of Newfoundland.
One is that we're better than everyone else,
and the other is that we're worse than everyone else.
It's like you take a certain pride
in coming from a small remote place.
But you apologize.

Yet if anyone criticizes or makes fun,
there's this fierce sense of grievance.
Two warring aspects in the same collective mind.

**

I never separate Catholicism
From growing up in Newfoundland.

If you come to Newfoundland as a grown-up
It's like converting to Catholicism as a grown-up.

The whole idea of Catholic guilt, you know?
And the notion that there's one place you can go
to tell a secret of a certain sort?
Irish families tend to have secrets.

When I was growing up,
to take confession as you were invited to take it,
admit to doing anything wrong,
you were considered being pretty naïve.

On many occasions I've seen
any sort of credulous boys
go into a confessional,
own up to something,
and the priest would come out,
yank open the door,
and beat the living daylights out of him.

That was your penance then.
Not ten Hail Mary's.
Not ten Our Fathers.
But ten cuffs to the back of the head.

I come from a long line of liars.

When you come in late to an island
(for Adam Young)

When you come in late to an island
and the party's in full swing
it's not love at first sight
well it is
but it's also hard living
not in a box
hard getting used to seeing the horizon all the way round
losing yourself
uncluttering yourself
gotta go gotta go gotta go

When you first come in to the island you think
oh god you're in Gander
got an hour-and-a-half drive to the ferry in Farewell then

got an hour ride on the ferry to Stag Harbour
 (and you hope it's not combined)
 and then you get to Fogo Island and you go
gotta drive gotta drive gotta drive
 you're a reluctant islander here in Shoal Bay
 and every now and then you go squirrely
 need your fix of family, Walmart, Costco, the mall
 beer with your buddies
gotta leave gotta leave gotta leave

But three years in on this island
 you don't think about time anymore
 well you do, you're a teacher and a husband and a dad, after all
 but at least you can stop and take a breath
gotta breathe gotta breathe gotta breathe
 a calming comes over you
 as you drive to the ferry
 and you cross on the ferry
 and you're home safe
 in the net of your ocean
 you say you don't know if you need a barrier around you these days
 but you guess you do
 since you find yourself painting it all the time

On the front porch of the island you watch the sun go down
 catch right-out-of-the-tube colour from the sky
 and swirl it onto your canvas
 markers and pencil crayons and airbrush and spray paint
 and wind like a thousand horses
 bending the windows of your house
 to your breathless
gotta paint gotta paint gotta paint

Especially the fishing stages
 jolly witnesses to decades of rain, salt, tides, and the ice
 spindly legs, crooked grins, zany hats
 a jaunty tilt of the roof and a smile in the lilt of the door
 a twinkle in the window of an eye

At night you hear them awaken
 take a walk around the island
 splash through the harbours, high-dive off the cliffs
 cavort with the seagulls, play hopscotch on the rocks
 they make it safe home by morning
 most of the time

Lately they've taken to showing up on your doorstep
 hiccupping and hungover
 sheepish and a little contrite
 so you reel them in to your canvas

and paint yourself into the party
gotta stay gotta stay gotta stay

Every now and then this island washes over you
 the interconnectedness of the people and the land and everything
 you guess it's from the stages
 that crossing the threshold, giving them life
 You say this island's the house that you sleep in at night
gotta dream gotta dream gotta dream

Bending Light
(for Hillary Younger)

People have certain misconceptions about photography, about what it does and what it is. One of them is that we try to represent reality. In a sense that's right. But in a sense it's completely not right. Because what we're actually trying to represent is memory.

—Hillary Younger

*Obviously photography
 is all about light.
 Painting with light.
 Holding back light.
 What you search for,
 what you strive for,
 is remarkable light.
 Then you find something earthbound to match it.*

Where sea meets land
 land meets trees
 trees meet mountain
 mountain meets air.
 Where the warm tones of day meet the cool tones of night,
 where the edge of light meets the lie of the land,
 where cool blue light meets the sea and the shore,
 you get wet stuff.

Like when you've been out in the bush for a week
 taking pictures morning and night.
 You sense the life in the place,
 the time, mood, pace of the place.
 You feel it. You feel the life.
 You become part of the tree.
 Breathe with the tree.
 You are the tree.

You put away your light meter and read it with your body.
 Like playing an instrument so well you don't think about the notes.

*You just play it as you feel it.
You try and catch it with your lens,
and transmit where it gets you
really really deep.*

You tell me how you
really really like
playing with the sea.
That mix of light and motion.
Part of you goes into right brain
so that all that you're seeing is shapes and light
*shapes and light and shapes and light
and lines and shapes and lines and shapes and light*
and how they're all reacting
and the way that reacts with film
is *magic*.

*Mind you, you say,
it's a tyranny
because it doesn't do my gear any good.*

You tell me how
the sun pokes above the horizon
or from under a cloud
or behind a rock
and you get this little sliver of bright sun
caught in your lens
it goes *thwang*.
Sun star.

Or the story of the dodgy track
crumbly steep
especially in the dark with your head torch on.
You shinny down the cape
to the sea ledge.
Sea storms in under the cliff

the waves haul in in sets.
You read them
til the timing is right
then jump to the next ledge.
I might get my feet wet, but that's all right.

You know about rogue waves
the ones that kill the fishermen.
But the shot's the thing.
And getting up close and personal with the sea
is key.

But this wave
 doesn't splash your feet.
 But breaks over you and tries to sweep you out.
 You hang on to your camera and the tripod and the edge of the ledge
I'm inside the wave it's on top of me I can't breathe water everywhere
and then it's gone

The stolen hotel shower cap
 still covers your lens.
 And as you drink your lungs full
 you think,

I wonder if it still works.

Deep Space (for John Steffler)

You went out to the Grey Islands
 but went in, too
 to the ghost place where you
 tripped over threads of stories
saw what a human life is capable of
and what it needs to survive in this place
 confronted loss
 in the way people had to leave their ancestors behind
 even as they floated their houses
 or hauled them over the ice
 to their new home
 on the mainland

Yourself
 the most recent newcomer, yet
 the oldest forefather

I was like one of those Irish workers
sent out by the fishing companies to make salt fish in the summers
and then go back to New Glasgow or wherever

and later stayed
 to fish and build outport lives and boats
 that bound them
 to the Old World, the Caribbean, and beyond

Like the guy in Harbour Deep
 whose father built a schooner
And this man used to say
time to go to Spain and get some more salt

The ocean connecting people down through the centuries
yet a chaos, too
Living near the ocean, or living off the ocean
trying to make a living from it
has a profound influence on people's sense
of what they can own
and possess
and preserve

No one can own the sea
You can assign fishing grounds, and you can make nautical charts
but you can't walk around on it, you can't fence it
The land rarely rears up and smashes your house
wrecks your garage or barn
But the sea does that regularly
Sweeps away wharfs and breaks up boats

In the world I grew up in
people could at least pretend
they were more protected from the vagaries of existence
But here there's been no hiding

Being on the edge of the sea
is like looking from the edge of the earth
into outer space

Late-night CBC newscasts
weave in and out the shortwave
Words furl into the sleeping bag
you hold tight to your chin
curl around ancestor whispers
that mingle with late-night notes
Miracle of a piano sonata
your conduit to the universe

It's how I imagine Mozart would sound
to someone in a space capsule
orbiting the earth
or maybe drifting into deep outer space

part of the unscripted dance you called yourself to find
there on the Grey Islands

things in yourself that might be as surprising
as the things you encounter outside yourself
a two-way discovery
of what's in
and what's out
there

If time should last
(for *Bernice Morgan*)

Cape Island her ideal island
really just a thin neck of sand
attached
(but not when it storms)
to the big island.

She remembers the day
and the smell
as if it were yesterday.

Wartime and the train from St. John's to Clarenville
large boat from Gambo to someplace else
smaller boat to the Cape.

Just a spit of land
but a playground for three meek
bare-kneed city kids
who had never been outside the garden
without their parents
dropped down on the beach
where their mother used to walk barefoot.

*My mother would talk about sitting on the wharf
and dangling her feet
playing under the wharf with pieces of shells
and bits of dishes and broken concrete all smooth from the sea
and there was sand
and there were gardens
and everyone grew everything
and the going back and forth.
I didn't know there was so much sand in Newfoundland
until I saw Cape Island.
As a child I thought it was just like heaven.*

But then the wells became salt
and they moved into town
her grandmother to a house round the corner on Merrymeeting Road
and she'd listen to them talk about where they came from
how nothing bad ever happened in the Cape.

*Yet the ocean was a constant threat, shipwrecks and such.
You knew you were taking a chance
and every year, someone died.
More than one, many years.*

*No doctor, no electricity, no roads.
Blocked most of the year
by ice.*

*Black dark, black dark.
You cannot imagine the blackness until you go to a Newfoundland outport.
That much darkness, there was always an other.
But it was never the ocean.
The ocean was quite obvious—there was something beyond.
But inland—
that's where the other was.*

*And the other is frightening
and threatening
and breeds myths and possibility.
My mother's uncle always thought
people were watching them.
My mother's uncle said
sometimes if you went for a walk
you could see lights
in the marshes and bogs.
It's not hard to imagine the unnatural
if you're cut off from the outside world
unable to exit
have no phone
no lights
no roads.*

*If she's not near the sea
it's like a room with no doors.
From her bedroom
she looks out to the narrows.*

*Some mornings you see a line out there that looks like ice,
and sometimes it blends into the sky.
Sometimes it's purply blue.
And sometimes it's like it's frozen over.
It's not, just all glittering white with the sun
and the reflection of snow or something.
I don't think it ever freezes over anymore.*

*Now she tells and writes stories
about the Cape and her grandmother and the ice and the others.*

*But my place is not your place,
your St. John's is not my St. John's.
We go for a walk and I say
I'll meet you up by the Paramount
and the Paramount's not there.*

*It's an office building
that used to be called the Paramount.
We're always using landmarks in a city that's not there.*

*My grandmother—what was it she used to say?
“Oh, I'll come in to see you next week if time should last.”
I used to ponder this.
Did it mean that the world would stop?
Or was it time?*

Too many stories
(for Carol Penton)

Ironie you should ask
 how many generations I am.
 I was born in Coachman's Cove
 on the Baie Verte Peninsula.
 I was a Walsh, Caroline Walsh.
 I had Irish roots,
 so when they adopted me,
 brought me here to Joe Batt's Arm,
 I just slid right in.

My mother was diagnosed with cervical cancer
 a couple years later.
 Sent away to St. John's where she spent nine months at St. Claire's Hospital.
 I moved in with my grandmother and grandfather Becker
 who were old even back then.

At that time Catholics and non-Catholics didn't come together.
 They just didn't.
 Of course the Catholics thought they were the best.
 And the non-Catholics thought they were the best.
 My grandparents' neighbours were non-Catholics,
 Jack and Emily Jacobs,
 and they had a houseful of daughters.
 And me being a little girl,
 I would spend so much time at Emily Jacobs' house.
 Roma, their youngest, didn't like me.
 When Emily would set the table
 there would be Emily, me, then Roma.
 I didn't know til later that Roma despised me
 because I was taking over her turf.
 But because I was adopted,
 and because my mother was in the hospital
 they were concerned that Social Services would find out
 that I was living with my grandparents.
 So they would have meetings and gatherings,
 and find ways to protect me
 if anybody ever came to ask questions.
 Island living, it keeps you close.

I remember one night in the old house,
 the window right here faced the ocean,
 it just had the four panes of glass,
 and my grandfather standing with his rosary beads
 in his one-piece underwear
 and he's watching through the window
 because my uncles weren't home.

And he's praying for my mother
 who was having surgery after surgery after surgery.
 So here you are, a child, and you're bombarded:
your mother is going to die, she's never coming back.
 And the words in the rosaries were strong,
Sacred heart of Jesus, have pity on the dying.
 Even the non-Catholics would come in and kneel down with us.
 But she didn't die.
 When she was leaving the hospital, the nurses said,
 If you had started studying your RN when you came in,
 you'd be graduating now.

I had two bachelor uncles.
 They would go fishing every single morning.
 Our house that we lived in was right by the ocean
 just like most of the houses here.
 I was an adventurous type,
 inquiring, inquisitive,
 I just wanted to play by the water.
 But everybody was terrified,
 waiting for me to slip on some kelp and fall in.
 My Uncle Anthony was a real drama king.
 At the supper table he says,
Saw that shark again today, Mother.
 And of course my ears just perked.
Oh, you did?
Yup, the shark came up the side of the boat and said,
"Do you know Carol Penton?"
And I said, "Yes."
"I want to eat her for my supper!"
 Scarred for life!
 And when I step aboard a boat, that's the ultimate.
 People don't realise,
 but I know that they did what they had to do
 to keep me safe.

When they'd come home from fishing,
 I'd walk down over the flake to meet them.
 When they saw me, they just loomed.
 I guess I was such a bright light in their life.
 Saturday night they'd come to the Parish Club in Tilting.
 When I would wake up Sunday morning,
 there'd be a bottle of Coke and a bag of chips
 brought back from the Parish Club.
 I'm a diabetic today.

Can you imagine having the opportunity
 to walk back into that era?
 Walking into the old houses, the old wallpaper.

The floor canvas was like big flowers, bright colours,
the old table with the spindly legs.
My mother, God rest her soul,
would always say how genuinely hungry they were
in the spring, before the seals,
how much she loved pan-fried ribs,
stewed flipper with paste,
their own vegetables from the cellar,
how delectable that would be
when that feed of seal would come.
It's gotta be hard for my seventeen-year-old,
or any seventeen-year-old,
to comprehend
somebody belonging to them
being that hungry.

I loves where I'm from.
When Joey Smallwood stood
on the tailgate
of someone's truck
up by the Fogo Island Motel where the hospital is now
they threw rocks,
booed, yelled,
How dare you tell us we have to leave!
Too much water had passed under the bridge
too many people buried in the cemeteries
too many people struggled to survive
too many nights sitting around a kitchen with the lantern lit,
doing your homework, using home-made bread for your eraser.

Too many stories were told,
stories that must have been sprinkled with fairy dust
because they continue on.
Thank God for them.
They saved us.

Rock/Shift
(for Don McKay)

The oldest continental rocks in Newfoundland and Labrador are 3,800 million years old, but the oldest rocks in the ocean are only 150 million years old.

—Newfoundland and Labrador: Traveller's Guide to the Geology

A deliberate member of the clan of come-from-aways,
you say you don't want to be anything else.
On Newfoundland, everything is a come-from-away.
Even the rock that comes from Gondwana, Pangaea, Avalonia,
jammed together to make this rock isle
stuck out in the Labrador Current.

*Other places we know
were where they are,
but here, you say, we are all new.*
The traces in the rock remind us.
Even the light trapped in the Labradorite
comes from away.
So you fit right in.

When you plug in deep time
everything becomes more complicated.

*When we encounter deep time it's a humbling experience,
it sort of prefigures what's happened with people.
Just the first baby step back and that erases us.*

Oil workers, miners
sealers, sailors, soldiers
fishermen
Beothuk
who did not have to die

On this island
time shifts, perception shifts.
When you first come to this island
all the communities seem so close together.
The longer you live here,
the further apart they seem.

*Hank Williams, Dr. H. Williams, the geologist,
used to call it
the holy ground of plate tectonics.*

And after the ocean has worn the rock away
even the shadow of our bones will be gone.
Aurora Borealis
(for Don McKay)

*Spirit beings of aurora borealis,
say the Inuit, remain
trapped in the rock, still
dancing the dancerless dance.*
—Don McKay, 'Labradorite'

We thought she was dead. Buried
in the weight of millennia
pressing down from above.
Lost in deep time,
beyond hope, longing, or even despair.

But even rock can't withstand the pressure.
Cracks appear,
fissures that deepen with heat and cold,
freezing and thawing
of each passing orbit.

And the sun is persistent,
always seeking, always yearning,
until one day she finds her sister,
seemingly dead to the touch,
no longer of this world
or the next.

But sun nudges her way
in, filling the cracks
until she stirs, unfurls,
hauls herself up and out

and in one electric motion
erupts, spills
molten joy encircling the sky
dances with the ancestors
at the ends of the world.

Beach ears
(for John Cameron)

Your love of water began
when your mother took you to the shore
beeline to the sea on little toddler legs
she'd have to fish you out

*there's this great physical yearning to immerse myself
it enriches all the way down to the bones*

Now you live at Blackstone
across the channel on North Bruny Island
where changeability is light play on water
a metaphor that runs more deeply

molten lead lapping, *shh shh*

*When I'm in doing dishes and come out on the verandah
I feel different inside myself
I leave my logical mind at the door
and open my heart
Only then can I begin to learn
the language of the rock*

We walk the path
to the shore in front of your house
halfway down
you point out the difference
*the sound of the waves gets louder
bush tang to the wind is gone
a flatwing is letting everybody know
that a couple of humans are coming down*

green copper nudging, *shh shh*

You show me sea green lines
indentations that look like carvings
*See that white eye
like a dragon coming out of the rock?
Guardian of the shoreline*

I ask about the footprints
that led me to your door
Etched in ochre sandstone

they look a bit like beach ears

You tell me it's the salt air and water

that push the iron out in circles
and as the salt crystals get in
and the sand grains swell up
we get bulbous mushrooms

*But what look like solid structures
you can see are coming adrift
And all these holes
that used to hold mushrooms?
I think they are your beach ears*

The coastal geomorphology
you thought was ancient
(240 million years, give or take)
turns out to be relatively recent

*these giant footsteps running to the water
are the ecological footprint that tell me
the sea level is rising
and the shore is eroding*

and the land is always listening

rain starts
tide rises
beach ears vanish

pewter, grey and malleable, *shh shh*

here comes the water

Goddess of Small Things
(for Rees Campbell)

You hadn't written it yet
the poem about the paper nautilus shell
you found in the wash of White Night Beach
one windstormy night on Flinders Island

You tell me about the argonaut
tiny and almost translucent
clinging to its shell
its eye contracting from the light of your torch
but without enough life to hold on
it flopped out

leaving you with the holy grail of shells

moonlight trapped
in the life force
of shimmer

But at what cost?
knowing there is no gift from nature
that doesn't extract a price

What cost to this island
are the poems you write now
'The last Tasmanian devil died today'
'Tasmanian Shore Bird Count 2010'

the shells you collect
often cracked and chipped
because that's how they *should* be.
If you find them like that
they have been used for their purpose.
That's why you need to be there, take your opportunities,
you don't need to kill for that.

Like the people we killed to make our place here.
Woolnorth Point,
known by the black community as Massacre Bay
and the white community as Suicide Bay.
Another place where you see
the impossible choice
to be shot
or to leap off a cliff into a raging sea

You are the island's conscience
brazenly pure
you see the small things
in the infiniteness of nature
each of those things an encapsulated world
one within the other
and another

Part of the conversation
(for Danielle Wood)

As a child you were the magpie
picking up the shiny bits of family lore
and hoarding them against the day
you would need them.

With *should I stay or should I go?*
pounding in your head
you left to write your novel
in the corrugated iron shed in Broome
far north of Western Australia.

Miserably homesick, unbearably hot
you cooled yourself with stories of home
where you could walk the streets with your mother and uncles
who'd known everyone since they were children
who was married to who and
who was not married to who anymore.

*Soaked in this big community memory
with the idea that what you do
will never go away.
Not very many things happen that too many people are outside of.
When the bridge fell down, everybody knew somebody
who was either on the bridge, or got stuck in traffic.*

But you could not bear being out of earshot
that home was going on without you.

Tasmania
the place where mountain and water make sense
where the light falls differently
and where you can be the kind of person who sees
the difference.

*I like knowing what my patch is.
I like knowing I can walk that far
and if I go any further
I'll be off the edge.
This is the patch on which I can play out my life,
be part of the conversation, whatever it is.*

Even when you left
You were always coming home.

My island's the house I sleep in at night
(for Zita Cobb)

You didn't know it at sixteen
 watching contrails write the road to away
 that even before you left
 you were on your way home

You didn't know it at sixteen
 as you dreamed of travelling the world
 that the light at Uncle Art's house would stay lit for you
 because on this rock in the Labrador Current
 a lot of lights have gone out
*and it's always nicer to see a light coming into the harbour
 than a light leaving*

You didn't know it at sixteen
 that the boat you sailed
 would become your house, your island
Every inch of it, I knew it well.
Through every storm in every night at sea
I depended on it.
When you attach that deeply,
to a boat, to an island,
your capacities as human beings
come awake.
When you move away from the edge,
whether it's the boat, the island, the bigger island,
and finally you're in Toronto,
how do you know who you are?

You didn't know it at sixteen
 that Uncle Art's house would become your house
 eight-hundred-square-foot salt box
 contains every single bit of space
 you need to live a life

What's here has a place.
If I want to introduce a new spoon,
that requires some consideration.
It offers all kinds of potential
because I don't get distracted.

You didn't know it at sixteen
 that you'd end up shorefast to this place
 as sure as a cod trap moors to the shore

You only know where you are
 when you're on the edge

*And the dead ones are still watching,
and the place absolutely remembers*

Everything returns eventually ...
(for Frank Ledwell)

... wrecked boats, messages in bottles, lifebuoys, jetsam, fishermen lost at sea.
—Joanne Harris, *Coastliners*

You would like that I'd remembered
flatter than piss on a plate
to describe the Bay at sunset,
when the wind drops
and,
becalmed,
you take up your deck chair,
pour two fingers of The Captain,
sneak another smoke,
and watch the sun
slip day's net.

As violet night comes down,
you bide your time,
waiting to hoist your sail
for that last short leg to home.



Figure 0.1 – *Charlottetown Conference*, 2014, by Susan Christensen
(used with permission of the artist)

Appendix B: Leaving by boat

<http://tasmania-bound.blogspot.ca/search?q=Leaving+by+boat>

June 14, 2011

It's a given that coming to an island by plane is different than sailing to one. Crossing the water, seeing the island slowly fill your field of vision – dots on the land growing into houses, docks, cars, trees, people. You drive or step off the boat, feeling like you've had a brief respite from your life – and if you've managed to cross on a warm day and found a spot where you can bask in the sun on the top deck, it can be like a mini-cruise or a great place to sleep off a hangover. The moment your tires or your shoes leave the metal ramp and hit the island, you feel grounded again, and ready for that last push to your final destination.

In contrast, of course, coming by plane is fast. Flying to Tasmania from Sydney was an hour-and-a-bit – one minute you're in one city, breathing mainland air, talking to mainland people; and eighty minutes later you're on Tasmania, breathing blue island air, talking to people who look just like the neighbours back home on your island. There's nothing leisurely about this kind of crossing: it's hurry up and wait as you rush to make your obligatory one- to two-hour pre-flight check-in, then negotiate long line-ups, grumpy airline employees, stern airport security, and bad expensive coffee, only to be told that the flight is delayed. No wonder you want to wash down an atavan with a beer or three, and say wake me up when we're there.

Leaving by plane you do the whole thing in reverse. But I didn't want to this time. I'm the kind of person who likes to get in the water a toe at a time; leaving by plane would be like diving headfirst into the hole cut out in the ice. I'd be wrenched from the ground, hurled into the air, and then I'd be gone. Hardly the proper way to say good-bye to a place I've grown to love. Leaving by boat was really the only thing I COULD do. As we bussed up the Midland Highway for the last time, I felt like I was saying good-bye the proper way, one kilometer at a time. It was a thoughtful good-bye, in keeping with the last couple of weeks leading up to my leaving. But as with

those good-byes, which I assured people were NOT good-byes, but rather so longs, see you later, it was measured, like a lingering farewell kiss.

As we passed through Oatlands and Ross, Campbell Town and Launceston, I was remembering all the trips up and down that road – probably a dozen in all. There was my first trip with Jane and Ralph and Emily to the Poetry Festival, stopping at St. Peter’s rest area and taking photos of each other by the graffiti’d water tanks. Then with Kate Booth to the “Sounding the Earth” conference, Kate explaining to me the forestry “peace deal” that was all over the news that day, and laughing at the kitschy cut-out western figurines edging the dusty desert horizon. Then with Pete (and other times with Sebastian and Blakey and Robbo and/or Mom along for the ride) for cricket in Branxholm, Forth, and Ross, and Low Head – and on the way back trying to remember lyrics to songs to keep us awake that last hour into Hobart. Being thrilled when I realised I felt a flutter of recognition as the contours of the city lights against Mt. Wellington’s imposing black backdrop were laid out in front of me. Then with Mom on our trip to the northwest, then by myself to the Island Youth Theatre Exchange performance in Launceston, then with Pete and Matt Newton to Marawah ... Remembering certain bends in the road and names like Paradise and Meander Valley and Mole Creek; looking for the tumble-down remains of Halfway House; and being disappointed the bus didn’t stop in Campbell Town for one last visit to Burger Me (home of the best veggie burger, orange poppyseed cake, and flat whites on the island). Letting the horizon line of the Great Western Tiers <http://www.greatwesterntiers.net.au/> imprint itself on my memory bank ... Seeing the chocolate brown soil, and knowing that it’s not much further past Devonport that it will turn to red, reminding me of the Island soil back home ...

We arrived at the ferry in East Devonport at 3 p.m., but found we couldn’t board til 6. So on the advice of my friend Pamela we lugged our suitcases over to the Gingerbread House Café and Hostel about three blocks from the ferry terminal. A renovated parsonage that was built in the late 1800s, the charming gingerbread house was a welcome place to spend our last few hours in Tasmania. The proprietor, Melissa Houghton, invited us to make ourselves at home – to use it as they intended: waiting for the ferry. A cup of strong coffee, gingerbread fresh from the oven topped with ginger ice cream, a chess game (my first in 30 years), and a couple glasses of

wine later, we were ready to head back to the terminal and board the *Spirit of Tasmania* to Melbourne.

By the time we pulled away from the dock, we'd scouted out our cabin, had a beer in the lounge, and were enjoying a pre-dinner glass of wine in the dining room. I pictured the leaving as a gentle separation, like disentangling yourself from the arms of a lover, knowing the return will be sweet. Knowing that when I come back, I'll do the things I missed this time, like visit the beautiful Freycinet Peninsula and hike into Wineglass Bay; camp on Maria Island; go to the Circus Festival at Golconda and the Cygnet Folk Festival in Cygnet; stay at a shack at Eddystone Point on the Bay of Fires; spend a weekend on Cradle Mountain; take daytrips to Marion Bay and Recherche Bay; fly on a bush plane into Melaleuca; cruise down the Gordon River to Macquarie Harbour and Sarah Island; go on the road with the Thylacinians to Flinders Island ...

People have suggested I might need to change the name of this blog, since I'm no longer in Tasmania. I think of another meaning of "bound," and shake my head.

It's feeling a bit dreamlike, this departing ... feeling Tasmania brush my cheek as I slowly turn and head for home.

Appendix C: A Goethean approach to islandness

While speaking with John Cameron at his home on Bruny Island, we talked about the paper he wrote about engaging in a Goethean approach to science ('Place, Goethe and Phenomenology: A Theoretic Journey', *Janus Head*, 2005). I thought it might be a useful exercise to engage in a similar exercise on an island. I have yet to try it, but it is on my list of things to explore further in my research on islands.

Following is our conversation about the process.

JC: By opening oneself up to the phenomenon and using imagination and feeling as well as the senses and observation, that you can grasp something about the essential nature of the phenomenon. Of course, being a wonderful writer himself, [Goethe] didn't see any distinction really between opening himself up in a poetic sense, if you like, and understanding the phenomenon as a natural scientist. So he came up with a process, which is, as you might expect, beginning with what is meeting my eyes, and then as you get to know something, drawing it, this just sort of brings in your interest in art and artist experience.

JC: Well, drawing is an integral part of the Goethean science process. In the first instance, actually just drawing down as closely as you can, if you were working on this particular rock here, actually just getting all the fine detail of all of the delicate picking on the surface of it, and then turning away so that you're just working from memory, then writing, noting down what it is you remember about the form, then backwards and forwards. One of the things I like about it, it's quite a long process. It's not something that happens overnight. It's literally weeks and weeks, if not more. And then imagining what he calls the 'time life' of the phenomenon. He did much of his work with plants, so that was visualizing the life of a plant from the seeds to the growth stages to fruition to setting seedlings and eventually dying. The same thing works with rocks. So much of my GS has been with rocks, and one of the remarkable plants, the grass tree.

JC: The same thing, this rock here which I've been talking about, is actually the time life of the phenomenon, I've got a sense because of seeing the various stages of the

mushroom rocks here from seeing what this was like ten thousand years ago. Another lovely thing about GS, it's not like you leave your logical mind at the door and simply just open up poetically, because I think there's great richness in bringing the best of western mainstream science and the best of the poetic imagination together. Along with—it's quite a rigorous process of developing one's intuitive sense of a phenomenon. It starts to be difficult to talk about this because unless you've spent a few weeks sitting carefully with your rock or your grass tree or your little mollusk, or whatever it is that you have, it starts to sound a bit airy-fairy. But it's not actually. By immersing yourself in how the phenomenon appears, its form, how it seems to have evolved over time as best as you can, and then what it's revealing about itself to you. Development of your own intuitive sense. It's not at all what do I intuit is the truth about this rock, it's more, can I just open myself up to allow the rock to express—this particular nodule to express its noduleness to me. Now how do you do that? You do that through repeated drawing. But at the same time, having filled yourself with as much knowledge about this phenomenon as possible, you then empty yourself, and just open up your heart space to it. Sometimes writing poetically, a line might come. We've sat here with this rock for ten minutes now. You might imagine if you've done this for three weeks, things that we can't see now, we can't really apprehend about it now, might express itself as a line of poetry.

LB: And also drawing upon our own knowledge, and what we bring to it.

JC: All of it, including in my case, training as a geologist. Then the process is a listening, an opening up to it, can I begin to learn the language of the rock. And that then transfers itself into other aspects of being here.

JC: And then the final stage is saying, okay, well, having been given the gift of this rock's presence, how can I be of service to this phenomenon, to this little bush or to this mollusk or whatever. By now it's not a cognitive thing. 'Let me try and figure out how to be of service to this mollusk'—that doesn't make any sense really. Having gone through all this observational, imaginative, intuitive process, then you might arrive at a place where you can be more deeply of service. That, in a nutshell, is the GS. What I love about it is its wholism. That it brings all of you, it brings all of your understandings and trainings, and westernized thinking, along with perception

and drawing and poetic writing and imaginative in developing your—he's got this phrase, Goethe, called 'Bildung', or schooling of the individual which is actually in a sense saying that we as whole beings—one of the things that we can do as whole beings is develop our intuitive rational cognitive imaginative facilities so that we're more capable of fully apprehending a phenomenon.

LB: When we started talking you used wholism in terms of your experience here, and they mirror one another don't they?

JC: Of course, and I take on working with a phenomenon for a while. I have a certain way of understanding GS and there are people who have been working on it for thirty years. The more I do that, the more I have a sense of the wholeness of being here.

LB: They feed off one another, too. I thought it would be really interesting to try sitting on a rock, that was surrounded by water and see what would happen. You'd have to be in touch with your rock beforehand to see what the tides are like.

JC: That is an arresting thought, because I remember from an earlier conversation, you were saying well what is it about the islandness of islands ... that's interesting—the experience of being surrounded by water as on a rock. It's really quite interesting. At some stage you'd want to let go of the preconceptions because that's a bit like—you mentioned phenomenology earlier. To work as a phenomenologist, and Goethe sometimes a proto-phenomenologist in his GS. If you know a great deal about a subject before you start, then to that extent you also need to at some point let that go, and allow the experience of sitting on your rock off of Prince Edward Island or wherever your rock is, and say, yes it's brought me here, but now I want to approach it as freshly and cleanly as I can. A great idea, Laurie.

Appendix D: The crossing from hell

Trying to figure out how to get between the Galapagos Islands in May 2013, I nearly drive myself crazy. Our plan is to fly into San Cristobal, then make our way to Isabela Island, which friends tell us is their favourite. But nowhere on the Internet can I find reference to a ferry service. Besides chartering a boat, or paying thousands of dollars to be part of a cruise, how in hell do backpackers get from one island to the other?

I now know. You go to a tourist operator's office along the main street, or you find an agent or boat-owner on the dock. You choose which company you want to entrust your life to by looking at photos of their boats. You pay your \$30 each (one-way). Best to make a reservation for your return, too. So \$60. You show up an hour before sailing time (6 a.m.). You don't eat breakfast because you figure you can pick something up on the boat. You join dozens of others with suitcases or boxes or packs sitting or lying on the dock half or fully asleep. When the boat pulls up to the dock, you see that breakfast is not in your future. The boat is a 32-foot, triple-outboard speedboat with a cabin that's only half-closed-in. You hand your bag to the captain who throws it onto the bunk in the bow. You take the first mate's hand and haul yourself over the edge of the boat onto the seat. You wonder if you should be in what passes for the cabin, to keep out of the sun, or out in the open, so you don't get seasick. You choose halfway. You watch everyone else.

There are 14 of us altogether—my partner and I, plus 12 young 'gap year' volunteer students from England doing conservation work in the Amazon and Ecuador. They are going to Isabela for a long weekend. Some of us put on life jackets. We cast off. The first mate sits between two of the young women on the bench in the stern. He plugs in his ear buds, holds onto his iPod. Looks like he's sleeping with his eyes open.

The kids have been up late partying, and so after a while some of them slide down onto the floor, drape themselves around what looks like an anchor that is wrapped in cardboard, using life jackets for pillow. They curl like sardines crammed into a tin. Others stretch out in the space the floor-sleepers vacated.



Figure 0.1 – *The crossing from hell* (photo by the author)

After about half an hour, the first mate makes his way up to the foam mattress in the bow of the boat, where the luggage is piled. He clears away a spot and promptly falls asleep to the constant bam-bam-bam of the boat's bow as it heads at top speed—three engines flat out—from island to island. Bumping, jolting, slamming. Watching the small rocky island off San Cristobal's harbour finally disappear on the horizon at the one-hour mark. Seeing small, uninhabited islands pop up on either side in the distance at the two- and three-hour marks—fleeting floating miracles.

The door to a small compartment that holds a gas can is flapping—the smell of gasoline makes us nauseous. My partner joins the kids on the floor to try to sleep and to keep from getting sick.

Soon it's only me and one of the young women at the back awake. She's wearing black flats—the vinyl coating peeling, soles flapping—fur-lined hooded jacket zipped to her chin. Eyes meet, roll ...

The sound of the engine concusses my brain—to entertain myself all I can do is try to identify the minor tones going up and down above the basic roar—the melody a drone. I play a game: can I shape them, force or direct them up or down, or are they

happening on their own and it is just my ears catching them, or is it a combination. I think I'll go insane with the monotony.

This just 'being' is sinking to a whole new level. Where can I take my brain under such unpleasant circumstances? I can't read, I can't write, I can't eat or drink, I can't talk to my fellow captives since shouting in each other's ear is the only way to communicate. And they're all asleep. I lie down on the bench. Blessed unconsciousness eludes me.

Three hours go by. The captain whistles from above. Somehow the mate hears the piercing sound over the engine's assault and through his slumber. He drags himself out of the luggage, picks his way over stirring bodies, and clambers up to the captain's seat above us. The tones change as the boat slows. The captain climbs down, heads to the head. The kids take advantage of the slower boat to use it, too. They come out disgusted, the most awful bathroom they've ever been in, water and pee splashing everywhere, no toilet paper ...

It isn't until after it is over, in the water taxi (where the driver circles the boat until everyone pays their buck), that we actually communicate with one another. Still too raw to laugh. The girl in the cheap flats tells us how at one point she was the only person awake. She felt like she was stuck in an alternate universe.

Over the next few days as we bump into the kids at Iguana Point Bar or on the volcano walk, it becomes this shared experience that we laugh about, uneasily, knowing that it was really, really awful. We share other stories, too. Like our first meal on Isabela: Could I have a latte, please? Sorry, no leche. Could I have a chicken sandwich, please? Sorry, no pollos. Could I have a vegetable sandwich? Sorry, no vegetales. Well, what DO you have?

The day before leaving we watch the supply ship drop its anchor in the harbour in front of our casa hospidale, small boats pushing barges that ferry goods back and forth to the dock. The smell of diesel. Men nimble, leaping from boat to dock and back again, a ballet borne of years of practice.

Leaving day. 5:30 a.m. Psyching ourselves up for our return trip, this time broken in half, with a five-hour layover on Santa Cruz Island. A plan to visit the Charles

Darwin Research Centre. Mix-up over our return tickets—have to pay again. They tell us we'll get a refund back on San Cristobal.

In the pre-sunrise we watch labourers unload onto little white delivery trucks lumber, furniture, whatever that is lashed to the barge. Men and boys jump from boat to dock, nimble, without hesitation, whistling in the half-dark their language. Gas exhaust fumes fill up the air as boats push the barges against the dock while they unload. Then more exhaust as trucks roar away. Nothing elegant about this process. We finally get on our boat. The trip back is just as bad. Try to sleep.

At the airport back on San Cristobal, the gap-year kids are leaving the Galapagos, too. I take a photo of two of the guys. Ask their names. Post it on Facebook. We don't know one another. We're generations apart. We'll never see each other again. But I'm sure they'll tell the story, too.



Figure 0.2 – *Stories to tell* (photo by the author)

Appendix E: Participant information sheet

Private Bag 78 Hobart
Tasmania 7001 Australia
Telephone (03) 6226 2463
Facsimile (03) 6226 2989
graduatesupport@geog.utas.edu



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (PROFORMA) SOCIAL SCIENCE/ HUMANITIES RESEARCH

Islandness, sense of place, and the role of story in creating culture in Tasmania and Newfoundland

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study into artistic representations of islands and islandness. The study is being conducted by Laurie Brinklow, a PhD candidate from Prince Edward Island, Canada, working under the supervision of Dr Pete Hay and A/Professor Elaine Stratford from the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania.

1. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this research is to investigate what we can learn from Tasmanian and Newfoundland artists about living with particularity and maintaining distinctive cultures on their islands; about resilience and innovation on islands; about living with meaning and quality of life on islands; about the importance of island identity in creating their art; about their engagement with “roots and routes” (staying and leaving); and about their attachment to place and home. In the end, I want to explore what islands can teach the rest of the world about how cultures evolve.

2. Why have I been invited to participate in this study?

You have been asked to participate in this study because you are an island artist whose work engages with your island place, implicitly and/or explicitly.

3. What does this study involve?

The study involves two to four in-depth semi-structured interviews with Laurie Brinklow, who will ask you about your artistic practice, including your personal background and artistic training; your influences, themes, motivations, and preoccupations; and about your practical, artistic, and ethical concerns as an artist living in Tasmania or Newfoundland. Interviews will be approximately 90 minutes in length and will be carried out at mutually convenient times and locations. Your responses will become part of a PhD thesis, and transcriptions of the interviews may be included as appendices.

It is important that you understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary. While I would be pleased to have you participate, I respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. All of the research will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of Dr Pete Hay and/or in secure electronic files accessible only through password on the School server.

With your permission – obtained on the CONSENT FORM – the data will be archived indefinitely at the University of Tasmania. If you do not provide permission for it to be archived, the data will be destroyed after five years.

4. Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

It is probable that your writing will be quoted or your artwork will be discussed, perhaps resulting in an interest in your work from people reading the thesis or publications. We will be interested to see if you experience any other benefits from the study.

If we are able to take the findings of this small study and link them with a wider study, the result may be valuable information for others and it may lead to published articles, books, websites, or other media.

5. Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study.

7. What if I have questions about this research?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Laurie Brinklow on 6226 2205, Peter Hay on 6226 2836, or Elaine Stratford on 6226 2463. Any of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you.

Once we have analysed the information we will be mailing / emailing you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the research study.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, you should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote *H11648*.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

If you wish to take part in it, please sign the attached consent form.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Appendix F: Laurie Brinklow's interview questions

PLACE

Tell me about *your* Tasmania/Newfoundland/Bruny Island/Fogo Island.

PROMPT: What does Tasmania/Newfoundland/Bruny Island/Fogo Island mean to you?

Tell me about your art.

PROMPT: What do you do? Why here? Why now? Has it changed/evolved over time?

Where were you born? Where did you grow up?

Tell me your story as an artist: how you came to do what you're doing here, in Tasmania?

PROMPT: Were there things you did as a child that foreshadowed where you'd end up? Tell me about your schooling (teachers/mentors) and your formal training as an artist...

PROMPT: If you weren't born here, tell me the story of coming to Tasmania/Newfoundland/Bruny Island/Fogo Island. How did you arrive? When?

Describe your place, where you feel most at home. Are you in it now? What characteristics of this "place" make you feel like it's home? How do you know it's home?

PROMPT: Is Tasmania/Newfoundland/Bruny Island/Fogo Island home? Do you feel like you belong here? Was it sudden or gradual? What binds you to this place?

PROMPT: Edward Relph in *Place and Placelessness* writes: "There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and

cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which we orient ourselves to the world.” Would you agree? Where is this for you?

Does your place affect your art? What are your influences? What are your muses?

What are your themes/preoccupations?

PROMPT: The landscape, the sheer beauty of the place, the elements, the people, the politics, isolation, quality of life – and what do you mean by any of these?

Could you do your art anywhere else? Have you entertained the idea, or ever tried to do it elsewhere?

ISLAND AS PLACE

What is an island to you?

Do you feel like you live on an island?

Does living on an island – the island of Tasmania/Newfoundland/Bruny Island/Fogo Island – affect your art? If so, how? If not, why not?

PROMPT: Does having a bounded edge mean anything to you and/or your art? Does anything remind you that you are living and making your art on an island?

Particularly on *this* island, of Tasmania/Newfoundland/Bruny Island/Fogo Island?

Do you feel an isolation that might come with being on an island? If so, what does that do to you, spiritually, artistically, practically? (And what do you mean by isolation?)

IF YOU’RE FROM HERE: When did you first become aware that you lived on an island?

EVERYONE: When did you first start to use it in your artistic practice? How do you use it?

How does being surrounded by water affect you? How does it affect your community? (Where you live; your artistic community....)

Do you think of your island as a prison or a paradise?

ARTISTIC LEGACY

What has this island given you? And what have you given it?

PROMPT: How do people think of you/how are you known? What traces of you are here/what mark have you left so far? Are you part of the story of this place? Could you have done what you've done anywhere else? Why or why not?

What legacy have you left elsewhere?

How would you like to be known in this island's artistic history?

PROMPT: Fill in the end of this sentence: I am an artist/writer/poet who...

QUESTIONS TAILORED FOR EACH ARTIST, BASED ON MY
ENGAGEMENT WITH THEIR WORK